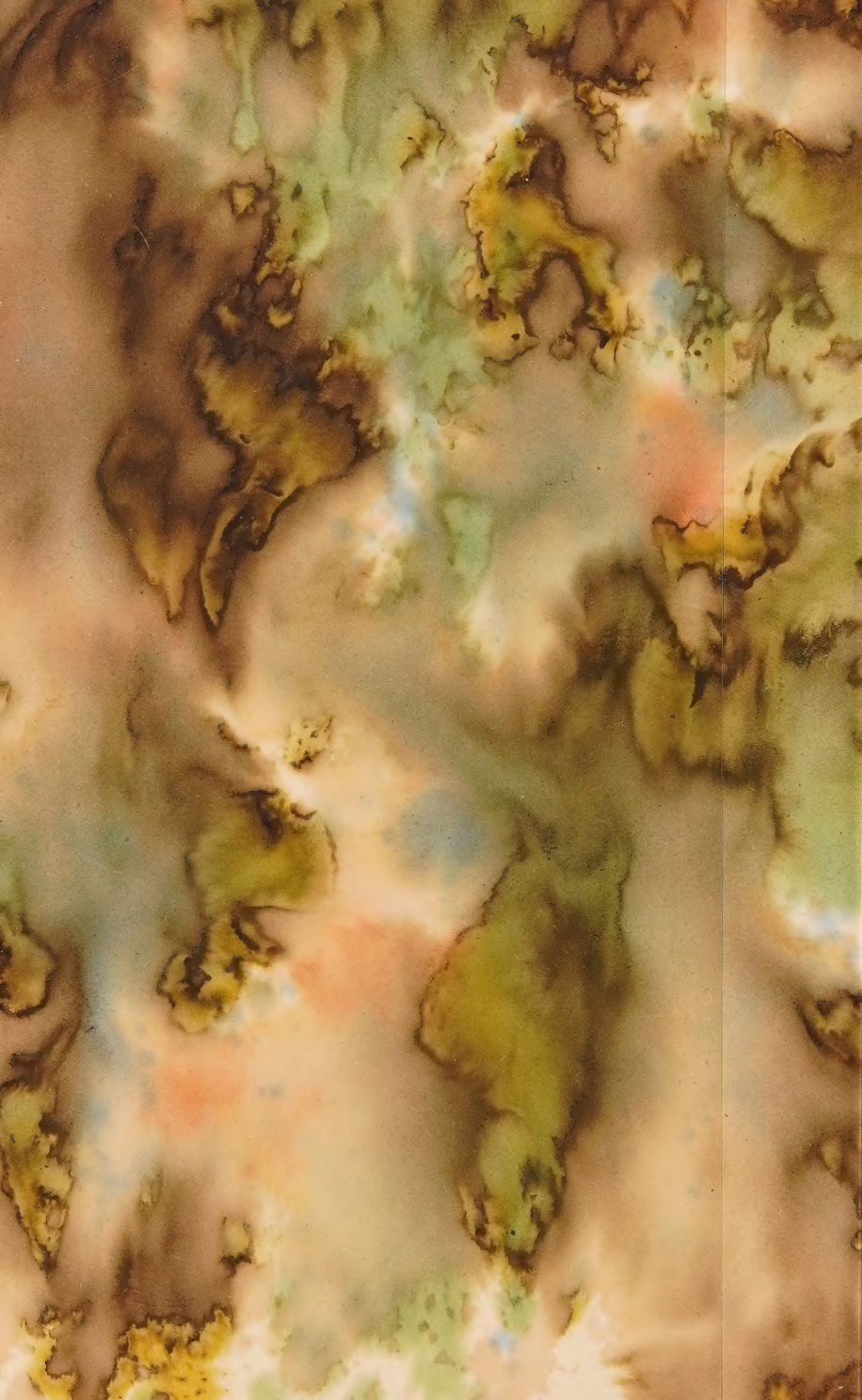
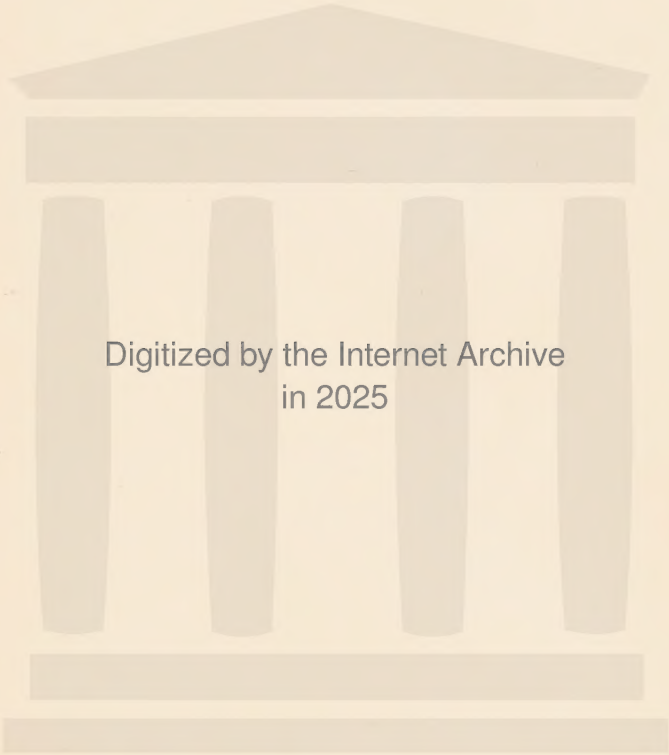


75

1st Ed
Author's 1st book
Original covers bound in
Extremely rare


Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025

https://archive.org/details/poemsbymelanter00blac_2

POEMS

BY

MELANTER.

LONDON:
ROBERT HARDWICKE, 38, CAREY STREET.
1854.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Eric and Karine	1
Mount Arafa	65
St. Paul at Athens	85
Poor Englishman!	94
The Fleet at Spithead	96
Epitaph on a Tortoise	98

TRANSLATIONS.

Hylas	101
Cyclops	103
Clouds	105
Love	107
From Shakespeare	109
Song	*ib.*
From Milton	111

ERRATA.

Page 56, line 5, *for* 'ave' *read* 'have.'
— 95, line 1 of stanza 5, *for* 'thing' *read* 'lout.'
— 31, line 5, *for* δόσυπνός *read* δύσυπνός.

ERIC AND KARINE.

A Drama.

FROM SWEDISH HISTORY.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

ERIC XIV.	*King of Sweden.*
DUKE JOHN, DUKE CHARLES	*His Brothers.*
SWANTE STURE	*A Nobleman.*
NILS STURE	*His Son.*
PETERSON	*Astrologer Royal.*
BURBHUS	*Ex-Tutor Royal.*
DE MORNAY	*Captain of the Guard.*
THORLE, ULF	*Soldiers of the Guard.*
OLSON	*A Swedish Yeoman.*
ARGAND	*Pupil to Peterson.*
KARINE	*Queen of Sweden.*
MALINE STURE	*Wife of Swante.*
ELSA	*Betrothed to Nils.*
BETUNA	*Sister to Argand, and Waiting-woman to Karine.*

The Governor of Orby Castle, Citizens, and Soldiers.

ERIC AND KARINE.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The House of Peterson.*

Night. ARGAND *asleep.*—*Enter* PETERSON.

PETERSON. Asleep! Young pupil of the stars, think you
To snore a science, and to dream an art?
A rod 's the only wand for thee.
ARGAND. Oh, sir,
I was so tired from last night!
PETERSON. Arise.
Heaven is no canopy, but a crown to-night.
Give here mine astrolabe, and concavum,
The horoscope I cast this morn, and the book
Of Cabala, which thou couldst not understand.
And—Stay. How durst thou move till I had spoken?—
That table, too, of declinations bring.
Where is thy sister?
ARGAND. Waiting in my room.
PETERSON. Then let her wait, nor show herself. There comes
Ere long a tall man, darkly clad, and stern.
Let him pass in, and look not on his face.
[*Exit* ARGAND.
There's not a cloud on heaven, though Autumn draws
Her white fog breath along the sea. 'Twill serve.
Strange how yon jots, a drizzle on the wind

Of time, or pile of the velvet-quilted night,
Should thus forethink, act, and conclude our lives!
Come ye, who with by-peep lull fools to sleep,
Or make shift for the moon, but are to me
Caparisoned officers of fate, unfold
Your deep phalanx, and vantage-ground reserve,
And rout and crush my just ambition's foes:
Ay, only three, still rebels to the sway
Of wisdom over maniacs and fools:
And two of those (Duke John and young Nils Sture)
More fit to cope with Argand than with me!
But then the third—her flower-girl Majesty,
Who came with hand of cottage-nosegays rife
(Sweet-briar and gilly-flowers), and kirtle pinned
Brimful of cowslips, and so plighted troth
With Sweden's king—I must be wary there:
She hath so bowered o'er King absolute,
Fragrant simplicity and garden dreams,
And softness rustling to affection's breath,
Of stars that pace the heaven, not one there is
Can pierce the natural proof-work of their love.
But what is woman's love, to stand before
A will like mine, which hath upon its front
Ambition, and behind it destiny?
Up then, Astrologer! Not all for nought,
Fair woman plucks her proud attire from thee
(As might an Angel from the pitch of hell);
And men fling fast their gates, and dash thee forth,
Snake to mankind, and leper of thyself.
Fool, to be softened by a sky of stars!
Thou hast made thy choice, and sworn farewell to change.

[*Enter* ERIC.

Son of Gustavus, I have waited for thee.

ERIC. What needs a king to keep time like a star?

PETERSON. One twinkle—and a king hath kept his time.

See yonder how the Caravan of night
Sets forth its golden import on the sky,
Nor pays one spangle, royalty, to thee.
Though we have dared to prick them into shapes
Of beasts, and household things, and even men,
Or slur them like a milk-pan's overflow;
Yet each one hath a solitude of state,

Distinct amid the populous depth of heaven:
The cumbrous earth, the planets, and the sun,
All wrecked at once, would send no ripple there.
ERIC. All that I know. I came to see my star.
PETERSON. Rise, star of Eric; whether thou art prone
In Libra with the sun, or riding where
The ecliptic and the equatorial arc
Accline their gimmal ring, or art astray
Beyond the hippodrome of stars. For thee
Night waves aside her ruder pursuivants,
Taurus, and Hydra, and Septentrio.
For thee, the grim Seneschal of the South
Forgets the club whereon his shoulder leans,
And Helen's brothers linger towards the harp.
Therefore no comet shall pursue his raid,
No meteors, or red squadrons of the North;
But Night hath couched her million shafts in peace,
And none, not e'en a spirit, walks between.
Then rise, fair envoy of so great a queen!
She comes. I see her in the windowed East,
Where first the morning plants his foot in June;
A moment—and she stoops to Ocean's glass,
To bind the tremulous wimples of her hair,
Then sets her throne high up the sapphire steps.
ERIC. 'Tis very likely. But I see it not.
PETERSON. Gaze on this speculum—quick, this glass!
What see you?
ERIC. Liar, how durst thou ——
PETERSON. Why, what sees my lord?
ERIC. I see a faint star, pale, and wellnigh spent
With buffeting front to front, and sidelong fraud.
Onward, in rushing challenge, a comet leaps,
So furious driven, that his light, outpaced,
Streams loose behind him, like a madman's hair.
And lo, in snake-like coil around the star,
Crawls a vile satellite, which grows and swells,
By filching all the honour of its liege.
They meet—they clash—how shall it be? They are gone,
Swept from mine eyes like a swordflash. Starmonger,
Twice if thou speakest, to interpret this,
Thou hast seen thy latest star-rise.
PETERSON. Son of Vasa,
Alas, I hoped not this. What thou hast seen

Is heaven's presentment of thy deadliest foes:
The one, a man of temper like thine own,
Quick to conclude, and vehement of thoughts,
That leave their words to follow as they list,
While they are rushing into deeds: and his
Are hot revolt, and torchlight gatherings,
And gestures of a weapon'd hand. The other,
In years a boy, but one of those who win
The hearts of yeomen by their looks, and make
Their noble lineage, like repented sin,
Ground for endearing meekness.

ERIC. Man, who are they?

PETERSON. Now choose, thou watched of heaven, which of these
Shall, at to-morrow's presence, stand before us,
Discovered, and declared.

ERIC. 'Tis ill for thee,
If thou concealest either.

PETERSON. Hast thou learned,
From me, the rudiments of celestial lore,
Yet thinkest to compel the planets' voice,
And rack the firmament?

ERIC. Well, give me him
Of arms and violence. Thou shalt cope the fraud.
Who is the rampant rebel?

PETERSON. Duke John, thy brother.

ERIC. My brother John! 'Tis scarce a fortnight since,
That I unjailed him from his three years durance,
For his rank dealings in Livonia.
St. Eric! He careth little for God's light.
Shall I trust thee? Thou art plotting with the rest,
With all the world. I will have him here at once,
And set him with thee front to front. And if
Thou provest not by earthlier evidence
Than mirror'd meteors, and comets' tails,
The axe shall make thy head a falling star. [*Exit* ERIC.

PETERSON. To-morrow! ay, the news will come to-morrow.
Betuna there, Betuna! [*Enter* BETUNA.

BETUNA. Sir, I am here.

PETERSON. Damsel, whom dreadest thou, the King or me?

BETUNA. Oh both, sir, both, with all my heart and soul.

PETERSON. Which most? Which most?
BETUNA. Thee most
of all the world.
A ghost is far more awful than a bull.
Oh, ever since that night——
PETERSON. Run, for thy life,
The back way to the palace of Duke John.
No—no, not Argand. Leave word that he haste,
On the very moment thou hast gained his door,
To Swante Sture's house, where twenty noblemen
Hold urgent conference, and expect his voice.
Off with thee—never heed thy cloak—begone!
And, after that, I will tell thee of thy star. [*Exit* BETUNA.
But not to-night: for I must lean on sleep,
Climbing ambition's timely balustrade:
For lo, the clustering sisters flash no more
Their playful challenge to the reckoner's gaze,
But fondle closer, blending as they wane:
Pants westward Sirius; and Cassiope
Hath sloped the chair that lasts a thousand thrones.

SCENE II.—*Swante Sture's House.—The following Day.*

SWANTE STURE, NILS STURE, *and* ELSA.

SWANTE. Thou timid child! Art thou the daughter of Clas Horne? Ah, poor Clas! I never knew his like; so quick on his legs, so true to his Church, so keen at a back-handed blow! Why, thou shouldst be a real Verend maid. When thou hast flung the spear for Nils, shall the Danes come in at the pantry window?—Tush, peril in these conferences!

ELSA. But father, dear, the King is so hasty; and, of late, he hath been so suspicious!

NILS. He knoweth our truth as well as I know thine, thou little Hylda; and, but for that astrologer——

SWANTE. What, Peterson? Time was I thought him a crafty knave; but now I know him for a fool. He hath melted down a real helmet, a stout Fallsbrö morion, and made a saucer for the Dog-star!—Curtel-axe and pikes! what is come of God's gifts?

NILS. But for him, I say, there would never be harm of the King. And have we not the Queen, so mild and pitiful! I doubt she would love much to see even a Dane gibbeted!

SWANTE. Mildness and pity to the house of Sture! The family of night and day! By Steno's glaive! he would have smitten thee. And from Karine! She courtesieth to me so prettily, I could wellnigh believe her low birth was against her meaning. But an she were mild, even to Hans Eller, he should cry "primroses" to her face.—Mildness and pity!

ELSA. Sir, she knows thee better than to dare it. 'Twas but last week I heard her say, that the Stures had some reason for their pride, for they were Sweden's kings a hundred years ago, if they had only willed.

SWANTE. Tush! what of that? Is there aught to be proud of there? What saith thy mother, Nils? 'Tis what they did, not what was done to them. But the young woman hath made good use of the teaching of old Burrhus. Yet "pride" was not the word for it either. A hundred, ay, a hundred-and-fifty and two hundred years! But she knoweth that Steno Gustavusson, was not of the true house of Sture?

ELSA. And then she said——

NILS. Another time, sweet Elsa. It hath gone the hour for the Court presence.

SWANTE. My son, art thou so rude as this to thy next-week bride? What care we for the gold chains, and the counts and barons Eric hath invented? Mayhap she said somewhat that we ought to hear, fair daughter?

ELSA. She said, that she sings the ballad of Brunnkirk every morn.

SWANTE. Excellent! — excellent in faith! Better than a hundred psalms!

ELSA. And that but for thy father and thee, she would not have Latin, but Danish to learn.

SWANTE. 'Tis very, very true. 'Tis as true as good blood. How the reading of history doth enlarge the mind! And when I come to think of her, the Queen is right fair—ay, by my horse, she is! and hath all the grace of a true-born lady, with more of sweetness, peradventure, than would well become thy mother, Nils. And as for little Gustave, he is a downright Vasa. To see him

trying to stand up behind his little drum, and then to see him roll over it, and kick it, and rattle the peas, and say he hath killed twenty Danes like old Want Shure. What a boy it is! An he goeth on so, he shall be wellnigh good enough to marry thy daughter Nils, when thou and Elsa have one.

ELSA. Father, sure 'tis past thy time at the Court.

SWANTE. Well, child, see you not I am going? but mind one thing, fair Elsa.

ELSA. What is it, dear father? thou hast but to tell me once.

SWANTE. Two sons have I given for Sweden. Nils is the last of our race. Thou shalt be wedded on Monday; and, please God, I will not die until I have set eyes upon my grandson.

SCENE III.—*The Palace at Stockholm.*

Soldiers of the Guard.

THORLE. Art sure 'twas she?
ULF. Right sure it was Betuna.
Alone at midnight in dark Stockholm streets
I stood within a doorway, and began
To whet my knife, to have a bit of supper,
Which she o'erhearing slunk beneath the house-props.
THORLE. I'd rather trust my own belief in her
Than fifty men! And e'en if it were true,
I'd swear 'twas for no harm. Thou fat-eyed skulk,
Stand guard on cooks, and give the word to baste.
ULF. Bark bread to him who loves it more than wheat!
SOLDIER. The King! the King!
ULF. How cometh he so long
Before the time, full robed, yet all alone? [*Enter* ERIC.
ERIC. Know you, De Mornay, if Duke John intends
To honour us to-day?
DE MORNAY. I think, my liege,
He is afoot e'en now.
ERIC. Stand thou without,
And have these men with thee; and when he comes
Close in and follow, but with all respect;
So great a duke should never lack a guard.
[*Exeunt Guards.*

Midnight was past, and still he was from home!
And those men whom I met by Swante Sture's house,
What did they there? And then that traitorous sound,
That murderous sound, which from a deep-browed porch
Scared the lone night—the whetting of a sword!
'Twas sung when I was three years old, "Light hair,
Light hair is Eric's death:" and his is red!
Tush, 'twas the dream of some o'ersuppered crone.
What! who hath set these naked daggers thus?
A triangle with a tufted cap therein!
'Tis for an incantation. Peterson,
I'd swear 'twas Peterson. I have foiled the spell.
Come then all ye who prowl for Eric's death,
Wolves, foxes, weasels, owls, and rickyard rats,
Ye dream not yet that he hath found you out.
'Tis good: but I have one still better secret.
So here comes that devoted friend, who would
Have no dog pick my bones except his own.

[*Enter* PETERSON.

Hadst thou my message?

PETERSON. I have come to meet it.

ERIC. Thy proofs, where be they?

PETERSON. Didst thou track thy star,
Or ope thy early curtain, while the dawn
Stood hesitating for the sun's assent,
To break upon the purpose of the night?

ERIC. Not I. 'Twas much too cold. What if I had?

PETERSON. Thou wouldst have seen a mightier proof than mine,
In fiery letters blazoned on the sky,
So red and wondrous that the Tiwed carl,
Afoot unto his pinewood toil, would drag
His chilblained wife from bed to gape at them.

ERIC. Rude man! And thus might he have prophesied,
"Thou seest that which shall not scare the king,
Nor save the weird man at the Court his head."

PETERSON. I know thee, Eric; thou art one of those
Who cannot kill, but bury deep their faith,
For fear of being afraid. But here he comes,
With more of courtiers at his heels, than should
Keep time with a subject's tread. Now ask him shortly

(If the printed heavens satisfy thee not)
With whom he spent his midnight, and for what?

Enter JOHN, CHARLES, *and Noblemen.*

JOHN and CHARLES. Good morning, brother!
NOBLES. Good morrow to the King!
ERIC. Greet you my lords! Good morning, brother Charles!
(*To John*) Before I bid that to be good for thee,
Which may not be for my good, where wast thou
At twelve o'clock last night?
JOHN. What means my brother?
I was with good and noble Swanto Sture.
ERIC. Noble, ay, very noble! But 'twas late
For Stockholm habits.
JOHN. Can it be too late
To counsel for thy service?
ERIC. Reverend sage,
Can it not be too early? I had hoped
Our sire (though not a six-tongued king or duke)
Could tell a Swedish month! But now 'tis clear
How wide amiss he registered thy birth;
And all my step-dame joys have been a dream.
My lords, is there among you one so hoary
To mind the day this light-haired sage was born?
Well, name the other guardians of their king,
As leal belike, but not so hale as thou.
JOHN. Eric, despite thy jail, I am as young
As thou canst wish in patience of a sneer.
For the rest—
ERIC. Our father threatens us, I trow.
JOHN. For the rest, while thou art in this Maelstrom mood,
I will not tell the name of one of them.
(*Pointing to Peterson*) Lo, thy suspicion hath its usher here. [*Enter* OLSON.
ERIC. Thou wilt not tell—King Lodbroc! who art thou
With last night's rime upon thy hat and beard?
OLSON. A nip of early hoar-frost, that was it:
But faith, I never saw the sky so red.
ERIC. Thy name, good freeman!

OLSON. I have come the way
From our Nerike King's bailiff sent me off
To tell your worship——
ERIC. Now, what devil hath sworn
To wreak his hate of baptism on me?
Thy name! or ere they call thou shalt not have one.
OLSON. Thy royal father, sir, would ne'er have thought
To menace thus a full-stead Swedish yeoman.
My name is Olson, and I bring ye news
Of sudden outbreak, not of yeomen, sir,
But craftsmen about Orebro, and Germans.
ERIC. Heardst thou, Duke John?
CHARLES. Now may it please your grace,
Nerike is in my dukedom, not in his,
When it shall seem thy wisdom to obey
Our father's testament.
ERIC. Sun-split again,
Till ye have made my realm a hop-scotch bed!
Yeoman, what further tidings?
OLSON. On the way
I met a man from Upland, with the staff
Rast looped and charred: and there is proof with us
That certain prentice hammersmiths from Finland
Have held the skippund to this forge of arms.
PETERSON. Great Duke of Finland, may a humble usher
Remind your highness to recall and save
Your Finland steward's son?
ERIC. His steward's son,
Prentice at Orebro! By the Mora stone
Thou art a traitor, John.
JOHN. And thou a madman,
Or a skymonger's fool.
ERIC. Off with him De Mornay,
To Gripsholm dungeon, to a blacker hole
Than tyrant Christian—stand ye so? Away!
What, doth he show resistance?
JOHN. No, poor madman,
Thou hast no fellow lunatic in me,
To leap at the flying bridle of thy frenzy.
My lords I wish you joy: his brother, I,
And once his bed-mate (and his baby dreams

Were half-sort fits), I warn you once for all,
The maniac tempest, seething in his brain,
Long pent and hushed by tender vigilance
Of my poor mother (whom though dead he hates),
Now by this devil wizard is let loose:
No land, nor calm, till it hath driven him
Unchurched, unfaithed, unprovidenced of God,
His soul a wreck, and like the sea-kelp strewn,
His father's tillage, and his country's growth.

ERIC. Thy sword, De Mornay! we'll strew treason first.

DE MORNAY. My liege, I'll take him to a room so small,
His next harangue, his tongue shall lick the wall.

[*Exit* DE MORNAY *with* DUKE JOHN.

ERIC. And let him have no light except his hair.

[*Enter* SWANTE *and* NILS STURE.

So ye have come at last. One traitor gone,
Two more succeed, but not to find success.

SWANTE. Traitors! The house of Sture!

ERIC. Shall be a dungeon,
With scanty room for all it held last night.

SWANTE. Sir, durst thou even dream——

NILS. Nay stop, dear father,
Let me speak, for thou art——

SWANTE. Swante Sture, whose name
Is nobler far than Vasa. Sir, a traitor
Is one who crawls beneath a master's throne:
A Sture must stoop to touch the throne of Eric.

(*Turns his back.*)

PETERSON. Heardst thou, my gracious liege?

ERIC. And saw, and saw.

PETERSON. If thou canst brook it, I cannot forbear.
Forgive me, Heaven, that I bewray you now:
That venomed satellite was yon Nils Sture.

ERIC. Hearken, ye Stures, who turn your backs on kings,
And will not stoop to thrones. Your dignity
Shall be proclaimed. I made you counts and barons,
Now will I make you kings. This very noon,
All Stockholm shall behold your Ericsgait,
And high instalment. Thou, sublimest youth,
Shalt turn thy back upon an ass's ears,

And stoop to touch thy throne, an ass's rump;
While thou, whose name is nobler far than Vasa,
Shalt smack a market-woman's whip, and lead
The prick-eared charger to the Danish wars.

SWANTE. My son, we will die first.

ERIC. Off with their swords,
Ye gap-mouthed fools! And straightway fetch their steed,
An ass no bigger than an Oeland pony,
A raw-backed jade, that hath not smelled for months
A cabbage stump to mettle him. And set
Straw crowns upon their heads. If I remember,
It is the badge of this royal house of Sture.
Not a word, my lords! The first who speaks shall be
Tied to their charger's tail. By hell, I'll try
If Sture or Vasa be the King of Sweden.

SCENE IV.—*A public place in Stockholm.*

Enter two Citizens, 1 *a Shoemaker*, 2 *a Tailor, and* OLSON.

1ST CITIZEN. On the ice, say you?

OLSON. On the Malar ice, wellnigh fifty years agone. My father was with the Upland folk who went to meet the sledge, and there was the Lord Steno Sture, with his head upon his breast, and his wolf-skin frozen stiff with blood.

1ST CIT. Dead?

OLSON. Dead! You may say he was; and his lappmuth stuck so hard, they took my father's wood-knife to cut it off. Ay, here it is. I always carry it with me.

2ND CIT. Thimble and chalk! What a thing to cut good fur with!

OLSON. 'Twas much too near the Danes for tailors to be there. He had taken the wound in battle, and filled it with wool, until he should rescue Stockholm.

1ST CIT. 'Tis a rare payment to make to his son and grandson. Ne'er saw I such a crowd since the fire of Stockholm Castle. But look at that old man! Didst ever see the like? He touch whip or halter! He walks among them like the great King Odin.

2ND CIT. But Hans, the boy, the boy! The jounker Nils upon the ass! And he is so like my Carl, who hath just been ordered off to Orebro. See the straw crown and the parchment ticket, and his poor head drooping on his breast, like his dead grandfather's in the sledge. But his eyes are so—there is no laughing at him.

OLSON. Laughing! Thou hadst best way laugh. Ye burgher fellows, ye are all from one side of the loaf; ye think more of these kings who fine a man to buy so much as a skrid-thong save in your "kœpings" and your "torgets," and who tickle you with a hare's foot, while they tear us with a bear's claw; ye had rather them than the true Swedish hearts, that love green fields and the farmer's talk. Thou laugh at them! An thou grin enough to show a hair in the plait of thy nose, I'll deal thee such a thimble-tap thereon, thou shalt never sneeze again without passing a bodkin.

2ND CIT. Come Hans, come away, man. This bark-chewing manor-thief is as personal as the nose-tax, and not half so waggish. If 'twere not for us tailors, who would know him from a bear?

1ST CIT. Nay, Bennet, he is not so bad in the main, but he knoweth nought of the guilds. And as for these upright men, they are very prone to be downright. Come friends both, this mob hath made a dust, and the Porse beer round the corner is not so bad. Though times be hard, and the leather so dear, Hans hath a king's klipping in his pocket, and when that be spent, he hath a pair of toe plates, every whit as much like money.

OLSON. Porse beer! Blood of Englebert! Shall a Swede be a tippling, while the last of the Stures is gaped at for a niding? There, I will look no more. 'Tis carved upon my memory, deep as the Runic stones down our way. 'Tis a thing to think of where there is no noise. Me too he hath threatened. We shall see. We shall see. [*Exit* OLSON.

1ST CIT. Here they come again. That makes the third time they have been round the Stor. 'Tis an evil day for Sweden. Oh, that we had that sky-cooper here! Bennet, ha, my lad, I could teil thee something. Be there any provost-spies at hand?

2ND CIT. Nay, nay, they be all in the crowd. Good Hans, what is it?

1ST CIT. There, there, never mind, never mind.

2ND CIT. Dear Hans, I keep a secret the same as thy shoes keep out the snow.

1ST CIT. And that's better than ere a man's in Stockholm. Nathless, now be contented.

2ND CIT. What an establishment he hath of boots! And a shopful of all the young lords.

1ST CIT. Hark you, Bennet. I know a man whose brother was out late last night; and as he came up Lang Gatan here, he saw King Eric and that black wizard go flying over his head, arm in arm, all the way from Riddar to Skepps Holm.

2ND CIT. The saint and the cockle-shells, you don't say so, Hans!

1ST CIT 'Tis true, Bennet. How I wish it was a lie! They were flapping their outside elbows, and the King seemed rather out of breath. And what proves it past all contradiction is, that he left the palace last night at eleven o'clock.

2ND CIT. Then, there can be no doubt of it. And the last time I saw him he had a feather in his hair. Well, I am sorry for poor Karine. My daughter shall never marry a king.

1ST CIT. And I don't think mine shall either. Lo! here they come; but the guards are behind them still. Now, if I were not afraid, there is some comfort in my voice.

2ND CIT. Thou fool, Hans! Can a cobbler comfort a count?

1ST CIT. A cobbler! Such is gratitude!

[*Citizens retire.* *Enter the* STURES.

NILS. Father! father!—only speak to me! These three times, thou wilt not speak. And if thou despisest me, shall I live over this disgrace?

SWANTE. Call it a disgrace again, and thou wilt make it one. Can a madman's slaver wash our glory out? But I will make a nidstang here, the like of which was never seen.

NILS. But thou wilt not scorn me, father?

SWANTE. Nils, boy, I shall love thee twice as much as ever. And thou knowest it, too—ay, by thy smile thou dost!

NILS. Sir, 'twas an honour for thee. Going, as thou

wast, afoot, with thy back all bleeding from the pikes of his household men (father, I will kill them first!), and thy white hair grey (as I can first remember it) with dust, the folk took off their hats to thee, and the eyes of many were bright with tears.

SWANTE. My son, mayhap 'tis true I have been proud; but never was I arrogant. To think that, after a hundred years of lives and deaths for Sweden, none should know the straw badge of Gustavusson from our escutcheon!

NILS. And Trollé, too, who hath been thy foe for years, to come and shake hands with thee before them all! But, father, what think you of Elsa?

SWANTE. That she will smother thee with kisses, more than thou hast been with dust. 'Tis the way of womankind. They cannot help it.

NILS. It may be, too, that my mother will not scorn me. But I care not to go home. [*Citizens advance.*

1ST CIT. Glorious Count Swanto, think not of this trouble thus. It shall heal again, as did the gash upon this nose, when the owner was in liquor once, and the boys pelted him with stone snow-balls. Now, let me rub a little heel-ball, or a lump of bootmaker's wax upon thy back. My lord, I will not charge thee a skilling for it.

2ND CIT. [Thou vamping patch-toe!—how durst thou compare thyself with the Count Swanto Sture?] 'Tis not a score of years agone, my lord,—no, not till next Hollond-tide,—since two customers of mine would have thrown me into a sledge-pond, pattern-roll and all, only the ice was too thick.

1ST CIT. Young man, I pray thee weep not so. Step aside, and I will measure thee for as hollow-heeled a pair of boots as I made for my brother Andrew.

2ND CIT. [His brother Andrew! A small tallow-boiler!] Young man, I will make thee a pair of Sunday smallclothes, with a stripe down them like my Carl's, and a running string at the knees. And when thou wearest these, what ass in Sweden shall believe that thou mountedst wrong side forward on his brother? On which consideration, I would entreat thee not to weep!

NILS. Out with thee! For which of thy brats dost thou take Nils Sture?

SWANTE. My friends, ye are honest, and I thank your purpose. But the soldiers are at hand.

C

Both CITS. Bless me! I forgot. I have left my shop open.

[*Exeunt Citizens. Enter* DE MORNAY *and Guard.*

DE MORNAY. My lords, I grieve to tell you, but ye must come with me to Upsal. But, by the King's indulgence, ye shall lodge nigh together.

SWANTE. Nils, dost thou rember the old rhyme of our house?—

"Unarmed enter Upsal's door,
Armour shall ye lack no more."

When we come thither, let me be the first to enter; mayhap it shall be fulfilled in me alone. Embrace me, boy, before we part. What an eye thou hast for a parry! —what an arm for a thrust!—and, oh! the muscles of thy leg! It cannot be that thou shalt never fight again! But for me—in truth, 'tis time I should fulfil the rhyme. The sword they took from me was too heavy for my arm, and my hair is whiter than my helmet's plume. Whoso hath marched all his life for his country, yawneth little ere he falls asleep.

ACT II.

SCENE I. — *Upsal Castle.*

KARINE *and* BETUNA.

KARINE. Whom say they?—whom? My king, my husband, Eric?
He who hath lifted me from ignorance,
And broad-eyed wonder;—who passed royal maids,
Ten times as fair, to choose the poor Karine,
And made her dearer than his crown and life,
And more (though to my folly seemed not so,
Else would I not have taken it)—his pride.

BETUNA. Sure you have more than paid him, madam, for that.
If once you saved his life, 'twas fifty times.
Who else would watch, and nurse, and live for him,
Smile gay love on his sullenness, and sing
Sweet Sabbath dreams to his rough petulance,
And hush him like a widow's only child?
I'm sure I would not do it.

KARINE. I must hush you,
If you talk thus, Betuna.

BETUNA. He is worse,
Since, by the great astrologer's advice,
We came to Upsal. And if he should prove
A madman, as they say, there is not a lord
In Sweden, save those Stures (how glad I am
Of their disgrace!), who would have any other
To be their sovereign, but the Queen Karine.
Why, madam!—what is it?

KARINE. Leave me—leave me, girl:
Had I an enemy, he would talk like thee.

BETUNA. I am sorry if your grace knows not your friends.
Some day you will be glad enough of me.
There's none loves you like me. [*Exit* BETUNA.

KARINE. Oh, yes; there is!
There is one who loves me, and hath spent his heart
On me, beyond his own, or poet's words:
His words—they are so sweet!—that I should say,
Beyond a poet's language, or his own:
The lips, that scatter passion on the world
In surging thunder—to Karine a shell,
That whispers fireside memory of the sea.
It must be that some wicked man who fears him
Hath loosely said (most like when in his cups,
Or smarting for some crime) this awful thing;
That he, my king, my love, my husband, is—
What did she say?—a madman? If it were true—
True! As if that could ever be!—as if
She, who lives only at his side, as well
By day, with broad noon full upon his eyes,
As in the untutored verity of sleep—
As if she would not be the first to learn
Her one possession and sole purpose gone!

Enter MALINE STURE *and* ELSA.

MALINE. I have not come to thee a suppliant,
To beg such intercession as thy sire
(Had he been bold enough) might have craved of me,
If Sture had ordered Magnus for the lash——

ELSA. Oh, mother!—she is so gentle and so meek!

KARINE. Madam, your pardon; but no Sture would dare
To order a free Swede the lash.

MALINE. Nor tell I
That thing, whereof each teller must make oath
Or ere his listener's heart begin to swell.

KARINE. Believe me, Lady Sture, I grieve thereat
As much as you do.

MALINE. Grieve! Think you I grieve?
Karine——

KARINE. Some call me Queen; but perhaps 'tis nought.

MALINE. Karine, at Eric's outrage grieve I so,
As at the gyved buffoonery of a madman.

KARINE (*aside*). Ah, then, she too hath heard it!

MALINE. But I come
To warn thee, that if Eric, King of Sweden,
Who owes his throne to Swante and Steno Sture,
Is mad enough——

KARINE. Is what? Is bold enough,
You mean. Yes, he is very bold—that's all.
MALINE. Is mad enough to touch one hair of Swante,
Or of my son—my last, my darling child,
I'll dash him from that throne, and cast him by,
To rave, and stare out the cold twilight days,
Crouched to the ring-bolts of a maniac's cell.
[*Exit* MALINE.
ELSA. Oh, mother!—what had she done? Sweetest lady,
Look up, and list to me. What she hath said
Shall never be; for thou canst stay the harm.
Do but persuade King Eric to restore
To honour, and to those who mourn for them,
His two most loyal and devoted friends.
I pray, for my sake, and thine own, and theirs;
One is the father of my orphan life,
And one, my love, and my affianced husband.
KARINE. Husband! Will he go mad?
ELSA. What means your grace?
Nils Sture go mad!
KARINE. Nils Sture!—I crave your pardon;
'Twas something else I thought. I am not used
To bitter words and fearful menaces.
ELSA. Mad! I have read of late how madness comes.
But now my thoughts, so darkly of myself
Ensampled, leave me little room to quote.
KARINE. No, tell me—tell me. I die to know it. I mean,
It will amuse me.
ELSA. 'Tis the mind that grasps
At things above its cubit, to renounce
Its Maker's parole, and to challenge forth
Creations which no creature may accost:
Then, leaping at the elusive infinite,
Falls down its own abyss; and, unrefreshed
By fancies brisk and sweet (its native air),
Shakes reason's torch a firebrand, and strays,
A puling monster, or a scowling dwarf.
KARINE. No! no! Ne'er saw I such a one! Did you?
Did you?

ELSA. No; I have never witnessed,
But only read of it.
KARINE. Have you been much
At court of late? Why need you stop to think?—
You must remember!
ELSA. Almost every day.
KARINE. I am so glad!
ELSA. Your grace is far too kind.
KARINE. Come oftener—every day. I will at once
Entreat the King (as I before designed)
To free the noble Stures. And then she will not—
That fearful woman—she will not attempt
What she hath said?
ELSA. She will kneel down with me,
To pray all blessings on your gentle heart!

SCENE II. — *The same.*

Enter PETERSON.

PETERSON. Ay, yell away, good burghers!—honest fools!
Too fat to scowl, but powerful to look blank;—
Bacon unstreaked—broad beans without the eyes!
And ye, proud shop-dames, in silk kirtles puffed,
And satin gorgets, rumpling back from me,
As I were what ye call "vulgarity,"—
I'll raise the price of widows' hoods ere long!
Well, I had rather to be knave than fool;
Though knave, set in comparison with me,
Is an ant-lion to the desert's lord;
Me who have met, and crushed the horns of fear!
But fool 's a sop, whereon to wean the wise,
Born to fill gaps, and christened to supply
An *alias* for scorn. [*Enter* ERIC.
ERIC. And what is madman?
PETERSON. Nor birth, nor baptism; but of death is he,—
The death, and oft the suicide of the mind;
Which being buried, the soul, its widow, can scarce
Live, or have feeling of her friends, or turn
From foes; nor hath intelligence to man
The ear's gate, or the embrasures of the sight.
Only the body with a monster's strength,

And eyes that are the hoods of fury's crest,
Hugs the dull cunning of a double self,
Or dungeoned, gnaws its flesh and pets its shackles.
ERIC. How is my star, thou Goran Peterson,
How is she, since I mortared up her foes?
PETERSON. Her foes! What, all her foes? Oh, rare equation,
Three crowns, three enemies!
ERIC. Now, Peterson,
What man hath patience? Rude be as thou wilt,
'Twill save much toil: but be not roundabout.
PETERSON (*aside*). Now, now is the time for it; or ere she come
To urge her prayer, and while he hath no arms.
(*Aloud*) One there hath been, whom scarcely fit to pass
'Mong falling stars (the eavedrops of the sky),
Thy royal planet took, and set in state,
To shine beside her, and to light the world.
ERIC. Thy tale—what is it?
PETERSON. She, who shares thy throne
Would push thee thence.
ERIC. Karine! my own Karine!
PETERSON. She is in foul conspiracy with the Stures,
To set Nils Sture, her lover, in thy place.
ERIC. A sword! a spear! By hell robbed of my arms!
Come here, good fellow. Oh, I will not hurt thee.
PETERSON. The king shall weep (if throne he hath or eyes),
So soon as e'er he ceases to be mad. [*Going.*
ERIC. Mad! no, come back, come back! Now look at me.
Stand closer, closer! Wedge thy keen glance now
Deep into mine, as blade-crossed duellists
Plumb for the impulse in each other's eyes.
Well! Am I mad? Is there a wildness here?
A stealth of something conscious, or a lack
Of reason's crystal, in the glass of thought?
What! I am clear; I tell thee I am clear:
What mean'st thou, glaring thus into mine eyes,
As murderers, o'er the pool, after the plash?
Stand back. It is a lie, to say my thoughts
Are whirled and wandering. I will think straight.

Thou art come on purpose with some tale, to try
If aught could madden me: thou hast tried well.

PETERSON (*aside*). Who tempts him further, is more mad than he. [*Exit.*

ERIC. Now let me try if I can think; if still
Within this dark and unsurveyed fiord,
Where, to the ebb and flow of sense and sleep,
Trim reason, and o'ercanvassed fancy ride,
If still I have—of that I cannot think;
It is not fair to test my brain with that;
Intrigues and tricks, and things that have more sides
Than nature's front and back! But nature's self—
The hillside morning, and the sunset brake,
The lowing cattle, and the hush of leaves,
Of these, at least, I may think, and Karine.
Karine! I clutch the implements of thought,
As watchmen grasp their spears to keep awake.
He hath bedrenched me with some cursed drug,
Siberian fungus, atropa, or hemp.
Or blood hath fouled that pearly camera,
Which shapes, and renders to the seated will,
The pictured flow and landscape of the mind.
Whate'er I love, whate'er I own, or am,
Even those elements, which eternity
Shall not impair, dejected are, and waste,
Like death-bed view of good resolves undone,
Or like my funeral, and as much my own.
Oh sight most strange, sickening and maddening!
I see my mind—a solid mind though mad!
What art thou, cloudy and unshapen thing,
No more substantial than the wings of sleep,
Or nightfall, or the flake in eyeballs dim?
Yet owing duty to the sense of sight,
In some half measure, as a vision doth.
Thou spawn of immortality, oh cease,
Thus horribly to curdle and to melt,
Now liquid, like the juggler's phial'd blood,
Now pulpy, like a woman nine days drowned!

* * * *

Writhe on, thou dead alive worm in my skull.

* * * *

Oh God, great God! if for my youthful sins,
By me forgotten, but in force with thee,

Cast forth I am from all self-consciousness,
(Save reasonable horror of myself)
Grant, in thy mercy, that she know it not,
And that I may not die at play with death.
* * * * [*Enter* KARINE.

KARINE. My lord, I have a favour. What, my Eric,
My husband, why look you at your Karine,
As if she might be any one to you?
Speak to me, Eric. Oh, what shall I do?
His head is burning, and his poor hands clenched,—
So cold, oh I could break my court-spoiled fingers,
Too weak to open them! A pillow, quick,
A pillow for his head! There, look not so,
Not at the door so wildly.

ERIC. Where is Karine?

KARINE. Here, my own dearest, to thy side as close,
As even she could ever long to be.
But art thou better?

ERIC. I have been asleep.
What was it that I dreamt of thee, Karine?
Art thou in trouble, that thine eyelids thus
Are moist, and glistening, and thy cheeks so pale?

KARINE. No, I am happy, very happy now.
Thou holdest all the compass of my soul:
No sorrow yet hath learned the road thereto,
Nor shall, except through thee.

ERIC. How strange it is!
I feel thy gentle voice repose on me,
Like sunset on a shattered pine, or as
A hermit's shadow on a troubled brook.
Now, at thy smile, the snowdrift of my heart
Melts to a flood of happiness, too calm,
Too deep, and still, to murmur into words:
And it hath drowned the snake, the hissing snake!

KARINE. Ah, could I only keep thee ever thus;
And little Gustave, so like thee in all,
His quick eyes kindling, when the maids in play
Make mouths at him, or feign to threaten me:
And then the laugh, which from his jutting lip,
Breaks, like the ripple from a coral marge,
Soon as his infant dignity is soothed.

ERIC. Poor little man! I trust he may not show
A darker likeness to his father's moods.

KARINE. Now promise this, this little thing to me:
When, at a quick affront, or hasty word,
Thou art aglow to forge the sentence-brand,
Remember, he, whom thou wouldst hurt, may have
His own poor Gustave, and his own Karine.
ERIC. When I am chafed, my memory is short.
KARINE. And shorter afterwards: men call thee harsh,
"The King is quick of mood and terrible;"
But thy wife better knows her lord. And now
I will entreat thee for a little proof,
That she hath not mistaken thee.
ERIC. What is it?
Long must thou search ere thou couldst find a thing,
I would deny to thee.
KARINE. 'Tis only this:
Release, and take again into thy grace,
The noble Stures.
ERIC. Woman, say that again!
If this be true, I have been always mad.
KARINE. My lord, have I said harm? I only meant
Swante Sture, and his noble son.
ERIC. His noble son!
'Tis in the stars! Thou lovest him—thou dost!
Thou wouldst kill me, to set him in my throne.
Not in my brain the snake, but in my heart! [*Exit* ERIC.
KARINE. What, Eric! then all I trembled at is true.
Gone! And such words as those! Oh, gracious Heaven,
Look down on her who hath no hope of earth!
My husband must be—yes, great God! he is—mad.

(SCENE III.—*The same.*)

PETERSON (*alone.*)

PETERSON. She hath never said harm of me, and she is like my mother's picture. Well, there is no help for it: my plants will never seed with her to make posies of them. He hath loved her so, he will now be ripe for anything: a little more madness, and the son of the sack-monk hath the key of the monarch's cage. Ah, where should I have been if it had been Eric and Elizabeth of

England? King of the stars, why was not I born lord of men, without such tricks as these? But the power is in me, and fate hath put me to the oath to use it. Men shall cross themselves at my name, and what care I for women's kerchiefs? Let them cry, and flip flies!—Betuna! Betuna! [*Enter* BETUNA.

BETUNA. Sir, my sister Margaret hath such airs, since she was married; and I am in the middle of a tuck.

PETERSON. Child, there came this morn a shadow on thy star. Instead of being near the Queen, and thy lover captain of the guard, thou shalt die a poor old maid, a drudge to a beggar at Malmo.

BETUNA. Oh, sir, what have I done? And she was so bright last night! I saw her, when I was doing my hair, like a dear little diamond drop. But you can make her shine again, sir, like a door-handle.

PETERSON. Only on one condition; that Nils Sture be set free to-night, and by the hand of the Queen.

[*Exit* PETERSON.

BETUNA. Oh, stay, sir, stay, I pray you. Well, now he is gone, I suppose I may say a word. Betuna an old maid and a drudge! And at Malmo, where there is nothing but pilots, who live on herrings, and hobblers, who eat their nails! And just when that lovely thing is finished, all but the skirt, and Thorle's beard getting ambrosial! But who could doubt that dreadful man? He speaketh so hollow, and there's a grey light in the middle of his eyes, like a 'scutcheon on a coffin, and he hath such an exclusive air, like a freemason's ghost closing the churchyard gate, or Ulf going home to supper. Why, even King Eric is half afraid of him: and as for Karine, if she heard that I ever spoke to him, I should never hit the eye of her bodice. After all, why shouldn't she let Nils Sture out of prison? The king would never know it, and if he did he could not scold her; though he seems rather strange to-day. I wonder if Thorle will be half as fond of me.

Enter KARINE, BURRHUS, and *Ladies of the Court.*

KARINE. I pray you leave me. I am poor company to-day.

LADY. Oh, but we have a new frock to show your grace for dear little Prince Gustave. How pretty he will

look! and we want to put it on him, and to set him in the throne.

KARINE. To set him in my throne! Thou wouldst kill me—I have forgotten the birds to-day, I pray you go and feed them.

LADY. Now doesn't Betuna look like a little dear that has broken an egg? Come, I am in such spirits to-day. Come and sing to the dicky-birds. [*Exeunt Ladies.*

BURRHUS. My dearest pupil, thou art dull, as if I had set thee too hard a lesson.

KARINE. Short words are harder oft than long ones. Remember you how long I took in learning to spell "wretchedness?"

BURRHUS. Ay, ay, 'twas on a Friday. Wretchedness! To be sure. And I said 'twas because thou couldst never know it.

KARINE. I know well enough—how to spell it now. I have learned languages to please the King; but I was not clever you know, dear Burrhus.

BURRHUS. No, no; that's true enough. Not like his majesty, I mean. Marvellous quick he was, to be sure. But your grace was always very good at a song about birds and the weather. Ah well! we have never read a sadder tale than is like to be of the poor youth, Nils Sture.

KARINE. What of him? What is it?

BURRHUS. He shall lose his head to-morrow. And though mayhap 'tis not a first-rate one for the grammar—

KARINE. So soon! Alas, poor Elsa!

BURRHUS. Wilt thou not intercede for him with the King?

KARINE. I have, I have done so already, vainly and far worse.

BURRHUS. Then is there no chance for the finest youth in Sweden.

BETUNA. There is one chance, Master Burrhus; your grace, there is one chance. Sergeant Thorle (I have told you of Thorle, madam; blue eyes he hath and a yellow feather)—Sergeant Thorle is the officer of the guard to-night, and you know the Lords Sture are in the dungeons here. He will give me the keys, he cannot say me nay: only promise that he shall not be hurt.

KARINE. And wouldst thou go and set them free? If

there be risk for any it shall fall on me. I have done much harm; let me have the power no longer. Get the keys for me. I will go.

BURRHUS. Thou go, my child! I will go myself. What is an old man's life to thine?

KARINE. Dear Burrhus, thou canst not go. The steps are broken, and there are no balusters. And thou couldst not pass the guard. Hinder me not. At what time must it be?

BETUNA. At twelve o'clock to-night, so please your grace.

KARINE. I have told thee not to call me that. So please the only true grace, it may be well. Go to St. Katherine's, and pray for me, dear Burrhus (I am half a Catholic still), and for the king also. He hath not been like himself to-day. Ne'er have I done aught against his will before. But shall I be the cause of death? Come with me, Betuna.

BURRHUS. And may it ease thy griefs, my gentle one. The sorrow of the tender-hearted lieth fallow unto pity. What was it I heard an old man say the time I was in London?

> "Lighter the foot, and kindlier the will,
> Of him who helps another up the hill;
> And he doth salve the gall upon his back,
> Who lends a hand to shift a comrade's pack."

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The Tomb of Odin.—Night.*

Enter ERIC *in armour.*

ERIC. Graze there, good horse, if thou hast appetite.
Munch, munch! Ay, nettle and stonecrop, by this moon!
Well thou art neither plot nor plot against.
I think he loves me: and one more there is
Still true to me, for as I came away,
The old dog looked up so mournful in my face,
To ask if I had found no bones to-day.
That I should juggle and outwit them all,
Hide in the ivy, or behind a star,
And catch the maidens peeping down the lane!
Poor things! I know not more to pity them,
Or the folk I met with faces gone askew.
Hail, Aser Odin, father of the earth!
Now, while the blackmaned steed—So, what's his name?
Himfaxi, dashes foamflakes on the dark,
Stride forth, thou hero, demigod, or god!
Hark! Ere he moves, he challenges, from forth
His lonely cairn, the troubler of his rest;
"Who is it wakes my urn? Art thou that king
Foreseen by Himmel, and by Scaldo sung,
To bait with women, and to catch white foxes?"
Yes, Odin, I am he; and come to seek
If of thy Nornas thou hast one so wise,
To leave unbailed the well that drowns her sin.
Lo, he hath burst the muniments of death;
And cometh this way, like a crag that takes
The word to march from earthquake's rolling drum:
Hark! the high clouds rustle to his breath,
His scabbard's trail hath cleft yon oak, and the rocks
Strike fire, and skirr like pebbles from his shoe.

[*Enter* PETERSON.

What! Is there man who holds his flesh so cheap
To thrust it here, when I am sworn, and girt
To make the slaughter-mark which Odin loves?
Or art thou his Bersaker, quit of flesh
Trenchable by the fangs of steel?
PETERSON. Wouldst thou
Attempt thy fate's artificer?
ERIC. I would
Attempt, and clutch, and crush my fate itself.
But thou art nothing but a poor crazed fiend;
'Tis scarce worth while, for a minute and a half,
Or I would shake thee sane. Bold son of Sture
Learn in the next world to distinguish men;
Thou camest prowling for some forest girl,
Thou foundest Odin!—
PETERSON. Eric!
ERIC. What's a wreck?
Down on thy knees to Odin, ere thou diest!
Down on thy knees! Thou wilt have less to fall.
Now die!
PETERSON. Karine!
ERIC. Karine! It is like something.
It touches and comes home to something here!
There, have thy life, to tell me, if thou canst,
What is Karine?
PETERSON. Thy pulse, thy soul, thy wife,
The fairest, and the best—
ERIC. The whole of that
I have forgotten—if it e'er was so.
PETERSON. Think of the white-haired soldier, and the maid,
Almost a child, who brought thee sweet wood-flowers,
Wild flowers: here is one, take this and see.
ERIC. Through branches touched by velvet-fingered spring,
I see a maid, in Nature's keeping safe;
Where to the whisper'd pleasantries of May,
The frank primrose, and dimpled cowslip smile,
And sweet glen-lilies thrill their silver chime:
Here smileth she unto the waft of sleep,
The melody, without the words, of verse;
For love whereof, the balm south is content,
Or ere he kiss, to hush his lips in dew;

And sunshine folds its plume upon her hair,
As on ripe harvest, or the amber floss
Yon stooping willow gathers from the lake.

PETERSON. Now gaze again; thou shalt behold her crowned.

ERIC. Transparent grow the dim walls as I gaze,
And massive grandeur throbs with beauty's life.
E'en to the midst of that imperial throng
One timid envoy hath fair Nature sent,
More for a victim's than a conqueror's crown.
She kneels in plea of arrogant surmise,
(What haughtiest prince or baron dares to frown?)
Then as she feels the golden tire descend,
Where in the morn her garden coif hath been,
She shrinks, as fain she would be out of sight,
To take it off, and gaze, and see therein
The giver, not the gift: and then her hand
Steals close to him for courage; and her eyes
Are on the ground, or trembling into his.

PETERSON (*aside*). Ay, he hath loved her with a poet's love,
Who maketh half the beauty that he feels.
But let him prate: 'twill not be long before
We hear the last of her.

ERIC. And since that day,
As some poor martlet, having thatched her cot
Snug in a golden temple, doth believe
Her nest the real treasure of the place;
So keepeth she, within a palace, a home,
Aspiring but to love, and yearning more
To feel one clasp than see a thousand kneel;
Makes me her court, my cares her ministry;
And every morning brings me flowers, and says
She must be still a flower-girl to me.
And I, though oft I have been hard to love,
O'ercounted cares, and made the most of ill;
Or sat in petulant vexation, hedged
With pride (whose quicksets most do rasp themselves);
Yet soon would pride, and care, forget their harm,
In sweetness, and in contemplation, lulled.
See, yonder, where our equal shadows fall;
I know not mine, till thus I touch my breast,
And claim the one which to that motion moves;

So hath my soul been flitting beyond me,
A shadow, cast at random, and unclaimed,
Until her memory rose and touched my heart.
A sudden transport snatcheth me on high,
A bound of spirits, as when children rush
From school, upon a field of sunny hay.
There comes a soft light through the forest leaves!
Fetch me a horse. I'll gallop to her side.
Betwixt our hearts a cold hand hath been laid,
And woe to him who dared to thrust it there!

PETERSON. To keep with thee afoot is task enough.
But ere yon moon (like sloping age) hath turned
From black to grey the crown of Upsal's towers,
I'll show thee this Karine. And on the way
We'll talk of her. [I dare not tell him now.]
Soon shall the cold brunt of Lake Melar's breath
Sponge from thy forehead these loose-visiting dreams.

ERIC. Onward! Each minute holds an age at bay.

PETERSON. Here is thy horse. Stand, ho, good Sleipner!

ERIC. Nay,
I am not Odin. He hath no Karine.

SCENE II.—*The Dungeons of Upsal.*

Enter ERIC *and* PETERSON.

ERIC. What here! Shall my Karine come here?

PETERSON. Ay, here,
With the dungeon keys. Mark thou what she will do.

ERIC. A passage dark and damp, and two black doors
Like coffins set on end! It is too chill:
I will not let her delicate feet come here.

PETERSON. Feet will not ask thy leave. And hands shall steal,
But not to thine, for courage. Knowest thou,
Thou art in the dungeons of thy castle?

ERIC. At Upsal!

PETERSON. And not ten yards from thy sworn murderers,
Swante Sture, and Nils, the gallant of Karine.

ERIC. Thou devil guide, my hand is nigh thy throat:
Tis dark, but light enough to die.
PETERSON. Then slay me,
If she delayeth long to free her lover.
Where are the guards appointed here by thee?
Where are they? Dost thou hear their tread? Thy ears
Are not so old as mine.
ERIC. Thou art Peterson:
Thy scoff bewrays thee. Thou art he would make
The death-groan of his wife an epigram.
Now see I all that hath befallen me.
My brain is clear: I have no passion now.
My heart is cold, as of a wandering spirit
That hath foregone the body and its cares,
But watcheth what may happen to its bones.
PETERSON. Think of Nils Sture: 'twill serve to keep thee warm.
ERIC. I'll not believe—— Well, one of us must die;
Thou slain by lies, or I slain by the truth.
Time passeth. No one comes. How well I knew
She could not, if she tried, be false to me!
Her love and honesty—there is a light:
There cometh round the nook a form—a woman,
All clothed in white. God, let it be a spirit!
PETERSON. Do spirits cast shadows on the wall? Draw hither,
Within this niche. Now watch what she will do.
[*Enter* KARINE.
KARINE. How cold and dark! And how I shake with fear!
These dreadful vaults! What would he say to see me?
Betuna fled—no wonder. There's a hearse!
A hearse and horses four! It is the lamp,
The shadow of the lid. Oh, light obscure,
And running like a shudder through the dark!
But think of poor Nils Sture.
PETERSON. Think of Nils Sture!
KARINE. What's that? An echo? I cannot try. My voice
Comes choked, like his who wakes within his grave.
Heaven guide me safely from this awful place!
So, this must be the door. The key, the key!
Not that—or is it the trembling of my hand?
Yes, it is that. Nils Sture!

NILS STURE (*within*). Who calleth me?
KARINE. Pull, pull the door within! I am too weak.
I come to save thee.
ERIC (*advances*). Thou hast come to slay him,
And die upon his carcass. Show thy face.
The lamp, the lamp! Off with that veil! Karine!
KARINE. My lord, it is Karine.
ERIC. And in her shroud.
Some other art thou, and not my Karine.
But being thus the image of my love,
Who died this morning, take one minute's grace,
Before I shed thy hot, adulterous blood.
KARINE. Strike when thou wilt. These and thy other words
Have well prepared me not to shriek at death.
And yet forgive me, Eric, ere I die.
I meant no harm: and if I go before,
How shall I bear to wait for thee in fear?
ERIC. Look not on me in that way. Let thy gaze
Defy and dare me. Drop thine eyes, I say,
Or flash one look of wrong. At least, at least,
Look not so like Karine. I cannot do it.
Off, woman, off!
KARINE. Oh, only let me stay,
Or come with me. I fear some dreadful thing,
Some ruin.
PETERSON. To Nils Sture, madam?
KARINE. To my husband.
ERIC. Away! Begone! I cannot bear thy sight.
Off to thy flowers, toadstools, and serpent-grass!
We'll keep thee a sweet "love lies bleeding" here.
KARINE. Which of my playmates envieth Karine?
[*Exit* KARINE.
PETERSON. Now is thy time. The key is in the door.
Wilt thou let both escape? 'Twas he who did it.
By spells—I know it, for he tempted me—
By hellish witchcraft did he gain thy wife,
By sorceries——
ERIC. 'Tis true. It must be true.
She was so chaste and loving. Here, thy sword!
Off with my breastplate! Fairly will I fight;

Though most unfairly hath he stabbed at me.
Now, if he conquer, queen and throne be his!
[*Enters the cell.*

PETERSON (*shutting door*). Fights end in something when the door is shut.

First swordsman in the world, and with the strength
Of madness! He would vanquish ten Nils Stures.
And more—the youth will fear to strike his king.
Good! he hath beaten him down upon his knees.
The voice of prayer! "His father and his Elsa!
And blessings on Karine!" a dull deep sound!
That last benediction made a short amen. [*Re-enter* ERIC.
But what is this? Can it excite him thus
To slay one man? His eyeballs stark unsphered,
Like bossy Geysers, or the column'd Hecla,
Fling from their craters—murder is it, or madness?
He cannot see me here. How fares my liege?
This little exercise will mend his health.

ERIC. Swante Sture! Swante Sture!—why keep you in the dark?

Old man, come here, and light what I have done!

PETERSON (*aside*). He knows me not! 'Tis real business mood.

Good chance to make a wholesome solitude!
(*Aloud*) Odin, there is another traitor there.
Him, too, must thou destroy. It is thy fate!

ERIC. My fate! What is it? Art not thou my fate?
Nay, nay—thou art not murder. Honest man,
Kind friend, thy hand! What—no?

PETERSON. The pen is wet.
Come, take another dip of red ink here.
At once write treason's headstone, or thyself
Be sacred to the memory of revenge.
[*Opens the other door, and exit.*

ERIC. Who stands there in the dark? An old grey man!
I cannot enter there. I am like an ox
That hath smelled blood in the slaughter-house. Swante Sture,
Come forth. 'Tis market-day, and meat is cheap.
[*Enter* SWANTE.

SWANTE. Ho, there! What is it?

ERIC. Ay, what is it?—what is it?

SWANTE. I heard a noise, and scuffle of feet, and oaths,
As soldiers peal to the levin of their blows!
Where is my son?
ERIC. I kneel to thee in the dust.
Here, in the street—beneath a thousand eyes,
This sweet step-mother's hope, this cooing dove,
Who hath made verses, and had praise of girls,
Kneels in—no, in the blood!
SWANTE. Where is my son?
ERIC. Not there!—not there! I have left my dog in there.
Heardst thou?—he hath such a melancholy howl!
When watch-dogs howl, it is their bay at death.
SWANTE. Where is Nils Sture?
ERIC. Down yonder, down the crypt.
We'll go and fetch him when his sleep is out.
I hear his breath come gurgling in his sleep,
And plash of dropping—big slow drops of rain.
I tell thee it is sleep and rain. But stop.
Call him not yet—not yet, till I am gone.
It is so easy to awake a man.
SWANTE. Then are we free? We'll take the field to-morrow.
But, first—for me 'tis nothing, but for him—
Thou must wipe off that stain upon my boy.
ERIC. Wipe off! How can I wipe it?
SWANTE. Kneel not thus,
A sovereign to his worn-out general.
That thou hast done I have forgiven all.
With me confession doth atone a wrong.
Now am I young again. Who durst suppose
That Swante Sture hath no fire and vigour left?
My blood 's astir for onset, and my pulse
Is not too aged to keep time with drums.
Saint Bowid! we'll teach those Danes a Brunnkirk tune!
From Skaw to Lubeck, we'll not give them time
To ask the clock, or look what way the wind is!
Halland and Gotland shall be ours again.
Norway shall hear of it, and bless the height
Of Syltop and Schneehattan. Ian, the Russ,
Still in his savage solitude agrowl,
Shall soon discover that thou hast once more
Swante Sture to marshal, and Nils Sture to fight!

ERIC. To fight! Oh, he hath been too venturesome!
Deep are the gashes of a Danish axe.
SWANTE. Nay, my dear liege, his wounded arm is healed.
And now take fealty of me, King Eric,
As did thy father at Vadstena once.
These fifty years I have battled for thy house,
And now renew my fealty to thee.
'Twas wronged of late. What of it? That hath passed,
Like tilt-yard lance. I would forgive thee all—
All thou couldst do, save harm unto my boy.
ERIC. Harm! What is harm?
SWANTE. Now, lay thy sword on me;
And take my faith.—What is that? The lamp is dull—
Is it rust upon thy sword?
ERIC. Rust—red, red rust!
Tis mortal damp!
SWANTE. 'Tis blood—new reeking blood!
Whose is it?
ERIC. Come nigh. Now, hearken to a word.
Hist!—let me hold thy sleeve! Where is thy sleeve?
SWANTE. Here!—here!
ERIC. Thy ear! 'Tis matter of great weight.
Thou art a tallish man, though somewhat bent
By age, and brunt of battle, and some grief——
SWANTE. Out with it, or by——
ERIC. Well, I have thought sometimes,
The sword sweats blood the while the beard is growing
Upon—what is it they call a dead man's body?
But he hath no beard.
SWANTE. Who no beard?
ERIC. Nils Sture.
But trees grow faster; and 'tis planting time.
I'll plant a birch shall rustle o'er two graves,—
Karine, and I, and little Gus in one;
And one for this old warrior, and Nils Sture. [*Exit.*
SWANTE. Nils Sture! My Nils! Come quick—come to thy father!
Answer me—answer! Oh! my son!—my son!
[*Enters the cell.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A desolate spot near Upsal.*

ERIC *in the background, senseless. Enter* KARINE.

KARINE. In vain! All vain! Three days I have sought and sought,
And one the sabbath. If it be three years,
I'll seek and seek, through tempest, drought, or snow.
So weak—to rest, no, to recover strength! (*Sits down.*)
And when I find him (as I must and shall)
Though he be gashed, and shattered, and bemazed,
A staring thing for men to stare upon,
I'll not start, no, nor shudder, nor turn pale,
Nor show myself the deadness of my heart.
Oh, but to think that after all my love,
Never again can I look up at him,
Or turn in answer to his voice, but with
A chill, a horror, of what he hath done!
But doth he live? Belike he will not lack
My nobly squeamish truth. What food is here?
The strawberries are past: the whortle plants
Have told their beads and died. Lo, there again,
Forgetting what he is! How long it takes
A pupil hitherto of concords sweet,
To get by heart the unities of woe!
Alas, poor Burrhus! I have wept for thee,
In the track of hotter tears. And brave old Swante!
By foul misprision of his ravings slain!
Ah fearful night! Ah yet more fearful fiend,
Who wrought such murders in my husband's name!
But worst of all, himself to have shedden blood,
Albeit in frenzy. Shall I love him still?
I think I must, whatever he could do.

[*Enter* MALINE STURE.

MALINE. Out of my way, child froth-wipe! I would kill thee,
But that I have a cage for thee to clean.
Hast seen him here? 'Twas here he was this morn.
Two Onsal peasants saw him on that rock,
Tearing his flesh, and wallowing, thrice as mad
As any parricide maniac in the Spinhaus.
The fools were scared, or I had clutched him now.
Oh, I forget! I shock this high-bred queen;
Hybrid quean!—I'll rend this tinsel stuff,
This phosphor'd wave, this shieling's golden moss
(Not quite so braided as it was last week).
Where is he? Or, I'll leave thee none, to make
Him fool, whom Nature meant for murderer.

KARINE. Is this what I have lost by humble birth?
Yes, yes, I saw him—when I reached the foot,
The top I mean, of this ascent, I saw him
Rush down the pathway of that deep ravine,
Then, past yon dark patch on the moor below,
He staggered onward, for a mile or more,
Towards the glimmer of that far-off tarn,
Haply in quest of water. Would my limbs
Were not so weary! I could find him there.
But wilt thou find, and bring him back to me?

MALINE. Bring back thy go-cart, thou skirt-clinging chuck,
Poor Trot, too fagged to toddle for its doll!
A flower-basket would revive its tramp.
I 'd swear she feareth lest sweet madcap rend her.
Is this thy love? But woman's revenge shall on,
When the puling steps of woman's love are faint.
Oh yes, I'll bring him back to thee, so calm,
So sleek, so nicely combed, and ambergris'd.
A madman? No! Deliberate, and demure,
And arm in arm with Swanto and Nils Sture.

[*Exit* MALINE.

KARINE. Then she hath never felt another heart,
With sweet encroachment, steal around her own,
Till self became the stranger of the two
(As simple rosebuds are o'erta'en by moss,
And make a life-home of the soft surprise);
Else had she ne'er ascribed unto revenge
The long endurance of a woman's love.

And now, e'en now, hath this one foiled the other,
And sent it on a bootless chase, where love
Long since hath searched, and knows he is not there.
And more—it hath discovered from revenge,
Where last he was—upon this desolate rock.
He must be nigh if he was here to-day,
Enfeebled, worn, starving, and sore of foot.
Sure, I shall find him now. Rend me, in sooth!
As if he would not know his own Karine!
Ah, look! This pebble started from its bed,
And moss-cups newly broken from their stalks!
I'll ne'er again reproach my country birth.
Oh mercy, Heaven's mercy! What is this? (*finds* ERIC.)
All stark, and—dead! No, he cannot be dead.
Eric, my Eric, cometh there no breath
Through these wan lips? Doth not one little throb
Stir this poor heart, to one yet poorer now?
Dead! He is dead; and I am left to die.
Coward! Is this my gratitude and faith?
God is too gracious to withdraw his loan
(Vouchsafed for us to 'stablish it a gift),
Because at first we have dealt with it amiss.
I knew, I knew, it was true. He breathes! Ah, there,
A sigh, to me worth all the world of smiles!
Eric, my husband, oh, if thou couldst speak,
I would give my soul to the murmur of a word!

ERIC. Karine! I know not——

KARINE. Yes, thou knowest Karine!
He knows me! Shall I ever weep again?
Try, if thou canst, rise gently on my arm;
Think of the load I bore, when first we met:
So strong I am, I could carry thee almost!
What's this upon thy hand?

ERIC. 'Tis but my own.
But leave me if thou wilt; I care not much.
'Tis Sweden's law to "leave him with his deeds."

KARINE. Leave thee! If 't were my father's could I leave thee?
Lean all thy weight—'tis but a few more steps
To a little cave. [I dare not leave him here.]
'Tis summer'd o'er with bryony, and what
We children used to call "the old man's beard."

There will I pillow, upon fern and heath,
My captured wanderer, while I fly for food;
And none of his enemies shall find him there.
ERIC. I have no enemies while I am with thee.

SCENE II.—*Upsal Castle.*

KARINE *and* ELSA.

KARINE (*aside*). Though little know I of that wondrous thing
Called human nature (never learned by heart
But from it), now my own heart teaches me
How deep affliction doth sequestered lie,
And nurse her shadow in the well of tears.
(*Aloud*) Poor maiden, I'll not be like men who urge
The pulpit, not the altar of distress,
To preach, and quote, and crush thee into calm.
Alas, she heeds me but to weep the more!
The bird of moonlight, whose lorn overtures
Touch like expression from a neighbouring spray,
More sadly thrills the audience of the night.
And when the sweet home of the nestling heart
Fades to a cold haunt for the spirit's dream,
'Tis not the urgence of a neighbour's voice,
But time and Heaven plead the gentle suit
That first wins over memory to smile.
ELSA. I cannot prattle smiles and tears with thee,
Whose dear one trod to dust my dearest all.
The smiles are thine, the tears belong to me.
But let him live. Their souls shall come again
To visit me (I saw them both last night);
His never shall come nigh himself or thee:
Dead Nils is better than mad Eric.
KARINE. Elsa,
Canst thou speak thus? It is not of thyself.
'Twill not bring back the warmth unto thine own,
To sing o'er the plunder of another's nest.
ELSA. It is as sure as death. Pray you, forgive
The rude promiscuous bitterness of grief.
You, only you, have striven, wept, and prayed,

And risked your life to check the murderer's hand.
Oh, be not angry! That which is on me
Hath gloom o'erwhelming all the shades of words.
And I have come here, not for consolation
(Which to my visit shall never be at home),
But, in return for all you did for him,
I would forewarn you that my guardian-dame
(No mother now) hath held the funeral feast,
Whereat, before the high seat of the Stures,
Dark-robed she stood, to assume the heritage,
As fits the childless widow of an earl.
Then with both hands lifting the brage-cup high,
'Midst yeomen, courtmen, indwellers, and carls,
She swore that she did therewithal assume
The dearest heritage, revenge for blood;
Nor tear, nor sigh, should temper sorrow's thirst,
Till blood had quenched the fierce drought of her wrongs.

KARINE. More slaughter yet! More anguish and despair!
But is there nothing—nought in all the world,
Of all the things which men are born to make,
Or gifts of him who made them—is there none
Which she would take——

ELSA. None, save King Eric's life,
And Prince Gustave's: of thine she makes no count.

KARINE. Nay, do but tell her now, dear Elsa, do,
How it was done—how, yes, how mad he was,
(That I should live to look for comfort thence!)
Oh, say that he was blind, and deaf, and wild,
A helpless firebrand in a villain's hand:
Say that he knew no more the things he did
Than—than I know what I am saying now.

[*Enter* PETERSON.

PETERSON. Fair ladies, I beseech you start not thus:
For all that enters is a poor quaint man,
Grown old in lonesome study of the sky:
Then if ye find a lack of courtly phrase,
Forgive a habit somewhat more acquaint
With silent lustre than with such as yours.

KARINE. Dear Elsa, fly not, neither dread this man;
It is the doer of the wrong should fly;
He can be but a half experienced knave,

Who smiles at women robbed by him of love.
And yet come here—it is too bitter for thee.
[*Leads* ELSA *out.*
Sir, you have lied of me, and done your best
To make my life a scorn, my home a madhouse:
And for the three days of your murderous reign,
You sought to slay me, while I sought my lord.
I, in return, took season of his grief
(A sorrow more than surfeited of death)
To spare your life, but banish you the realm:
'Twas two days since; then why observe you not
The sole condition upon which you live?

PETERSON. Great queen, there is a law (concession scant
Of turmoiled chance, or destiny, or God—
Almost begin I to confess the last)
Whereby the labouring spirit, which hath paid
More toil than is the rack-rent of its home,
And made thereof a watch-tower, to approach
The nobler elements of the world above,
Wins on their cold affection to receive
Some warning, when its term of flesh is nigh.
(*Aside.*) Moved? Ah, what woman can resist a speech
With much of mist, and more of wistful tones?
With skill, this desperate effort shall succeed.
But, strange! I half believe my own romance.
[*Enter* ERIC.

ERIC. Wizard, hast thou a charm from steel, and fire,
And hempen rope, and all of mortal means,
That still thou darest here; and thinkest still
To slay, or madden, all above thyself,
And prop that shrivelled carcass in a throne?

PETERSON. That thou art living to revile me thus
Is due to me. Some day thou shalt confess
That all was true, save only as regards
This lady, by misprision of one star.
It is beneath me to defend myself.
Two foes are gone. But one, the worst of all,
Is loose again, on deadly schemes intent.
At peril of my life I hurried back,
To lay before thee clearest evidence
(Not of the sky, but such as groundlings love):
Whereby thou mayest yet escape the plot
Now kindling to consume thee and thy queen.

ERIC. Then let it burst, and light thy road to hell.
Nay, sweet, my new-born patience is out:
Go thou awhile. I'll do no violence; [*Exit* KARINE.
Though, but for scorn, 't would choke me to withhold.
Be my doom as it will. It is not fate,
But justice: I have earned it and abide.
For thee, thy doom is this. Take one day's start,
And then I will proclaim on every hill,
That thou art outcast from the laws of men,
Forfeit of blood, and slipped for savage chase,
With pitchforks, bludgeons, shodden poles, and hounds,
Like wolf that hath devoured the parish priest.
De Mornay! Here take him and turn him forth.
[*Enter* DE MORNAY.

PETERSON. Then close thine eyes, and take the blow of fate.
Oh sane, but blind, it is the hand of death
Dispels thy madness, and now holds thee still,
To mark thy harness-joints. For me, no doom
Of level blow, but Heaven's impending will.
Is there of men who dares lay hands on me?

DE MORNAY. Saint Andrew, no! But I have a blood-hound here,
Would meet his fangs in the throat of Michael Scot.
[*Exit with* PETERSON.

ERIC. Tush, fate and stars! We'll have no more of them.
As peasants in a smithy, all agape
At seething water and the anvil-sparks,
Have left their ploughshares rusting by the door;
So while we cranny out the welkin shale,
Or peer at darksome death, the all-quenching wave,
We have flung behind us as an irksome load,
The hard appliance, and the shirt-sleeve will,
Whence only springs the glistening crop, success.
But ah, for me, I fear, 'tis all too late. [*Re-enter* KARINE.
Karine, come here, now look upon this man,
Who hath lost the right to meet a gentle gaze.
I saw thee once turn from the Roman tale,
From reading of that vampire butterfly,
That sheep-eyed, smiling, toying, kissing cut-throat,
Who knew not—e'en from incest—if he were
A boy or woman, only not a man;
The emperor of the world, who left his name

To certify the venom of a cur.
Do I not well to scorn and loath him thus?
Yes I, king Nero-Eric! Fetch a fiddle.
I have outdone my master, and will sing:
Like me, he slew his Burrhus; but unlike,
He stabbed not to the heart his faithful slave.

KARINE. Once more these cruel words! My dearest lord,
What have I done, that thou shouldst trample thus
And scorch the tear-sprung aftermath of hope?
How I have longed that I were eloquent,
And born to argue as great ladies are!
Soon would I prove thee to have been no more
A—culprit for those deeds, than is the wind
A fanatic for blowing down a church.

ERIC. Still art thou nurtured more than taught, and more
Affection's child than reason's graduate.
If Heaven doth not hold me to stern answer,
For being in the state to do "those deeds,"
'Twill be for thy sake, not thine arguments.

KARINE. Now, Eric, if thou owest me amends
(As thou dost fancy) for believing once
That I could ever be untrue to thee,
Pay me by thinking never more of that;
But think of me and Gustave.

ERIC. Ah, Karine,
For me hope cannot paint without a sponge.
To thee alone I may be as I was
(Thee my nepenthe and mine asyrite),
But never to myself—nor to mankind.
Who once from reason's offing hath been driven,
Is evermore a strange sail to the world.
Steer as he may, and hug, at every tack,
Deliberation's very flattest shore,
None shall there be to hail him, or to shape
As fellow-voyagers in the stress of life.

KARINE. Yes one there shall be, and that one his wife.
Come let us be unladen of the world,
The bulk of care, and merchandise of thought,
And furl the blazonry of fluttering state.
Among those happy islands will we glide,
Where Nature hath the only show of pride,

Beneath whose willow fringe the water lies,
As clear and tranquil as an infant's eyes:
Sun may not enter from his zenith march,
But stoops to peer along the clustering arch;
Wherein (like clues to fairy love) embower
Clematis, woodbine, and the acacia-flower:
Lulled here, how sweetly may the spirit seem
That this is real, and the world a dream.

ERIC. And so will we think, having earned our rest.
But now, while peasant rebels are astir,
And all the state is angry and disturbed,
To seek repose were cowardice and theft:
Though little value hath it been to me,
I must not wrong young Gustave of a throne.
Thou knowest, I march for Orebro to-night.

KARINE. Ah, yes! But first, according to thy words,
Try we to give, before we seek redress.
Duke John already hast thou set at large.

ERIC. Have I? Ah, true; and little thanks I took!

KARINE. And now, come with me to the Lady Sture's,
To try if aught our deepest penitence,
And life-long reparation may prevail
To ransom from the wood.

ERIC. Ah, how she counts
Her pure self one with me, e'en in my crimes!

SCENE III.—*The House of the Stures.*

DUKE JOHN, DUKE CHARLES, *and* LADY STURE.

MALINE. No more to me of reasons! What care I
For public good, or Sweden's benefit?
So, if ye crave a pulpit and a text,
To satisfy your coward consciences,
Go get your audience of Sunday widows,
Whose husbands and whose children were not murdered.

JOHN. But, madam, all I wish to prove is this—
That it is right our country should depose
A king who hath these season storms of madness,—
This falling sickness of the intellect;
How soon again——

MALINE. Talk herb-wenches of that,
And drug-shop boys: enough for me it is
An epilepsy that hath foamed with blood—
The blood of all I ever owned or loved.
And for the country;—think you that it is
The country shall dethrone him? I will do it,—
I, the last widow and mother of a Sture.
I'll have no lagman to cry shares with me.

CHARLES. Nay, then, although I have agreed to join
In binding our half-brother to abide
By Sweden's laws——

JOHN. Hist, Charles—thou art so young!
Thou dost mistake our aunt. Sure that is all
Which she, or I, or any one designs.
Now, go thou to the market-place, and see
Thy honest frankmen do not show their arms.

CHARLES. 'Tis no conspiracy I want, but law.
[*Exit* CHARLES.

JOHN. So, madam, see you, this untimely heat
Had wellnigh burnt the roots of our design?
Without his aid 'tis vain for us to rise.
Now, listen for a moment, and be calm;
Revenge must lay ere she begins to cluck.
This evening, Eric marches to suppress
The lingering insurrection in the west;
And with him go his truest officers,
De Mornay, Silversparre, and Gilbert Balfour.
While, near at hand, Count Lionshed, thy brother
(My valiant uncle), and the barons three,
The fierce Stenbocks, hold all their yeomen ready,
With our poor brother, Magnus of the Dale,
To close upon his rear, and cut him off
From Upsal Castle, and from Stockholm's walls.
Meanwhile the real danger of the plot
(Albeit he hath dismissed his Provost-spies)
Falls, as was meet, on me. I am prepared
(Though time hath failed me for my Finlanders)
To seize the city, with my brother's men
From Sudermania, Vermeland, and Nerike.

MALINE. And can the city still abide its time,
Nor rush to scourge him through her outraged streets?

JOHN. Why, as for that, I have succeeded well,
To scare the townsmen halfway of their wits,

By hints of Peterson's return and triumph,
Confirmed by proof that he was seen at Upsal.
And now expect they, till this arm shall rear
Our flag-tree, fashioned from Knapforsen's oak,
And set the oak-leaf signal in my plume.
Meanwhile, for men who fret not, neither shrink
At anything, until 'tis on their heads,
For these I must have gold.

MALINE. Gold have I none,
But Odal land of twice three hundred years:
Take all—take every clod and worm that 's in it,
And turn them into gold. He hath not left
One of Sture's kin to claim the bargain first,
Nor any more for me to bury there.

JOHN. But will it fetch two hundred thousand guilders?

MALINE. Two hundred thousand! Dost thou take the Stures
For Lubeck usurers, or Antwerp Jews?
All land, and gems, and every dress, save one,
I'll sell and pledge; but 'twill not bring thee more
Than fifty thousand.

JOHN. Then revenge must keep.
Poor fifty thousand leaves good hoarding room.
Stay! Who comes here? By the triple crown!—my brother!
Now, fly not; but dissemble, if thou canst,
And when he offers ransom, ask for gold.

MALINE. I will not fly. Nor yet will I dissemble.

[JOHN *retires*. *Enter* ERIC *and* KARINE.

KARINE. Lady Maline, so bitterly we know
What we have done. Oh, look upon him now,
And bid him speak! 'Tis thus, and worse than thus,
He hath been ever since. Couldst thou but see
How broken and dejected—

ERIC. Hush, nor set
My drivellings near her majesty of woe.
Thou deepest wronged one, piteously robbed,
And barbarously made desolate by me,
I am not mad enough to hope thy pardon.
My voice, so loathèd, shall not rack thy ears
More than to crave some bitterest penalty.
Impose the heaviest thou canst conceive,
I'll treble, and fulfil it as my doom.

None wilt thou lay on me? She knows it is
The darkest penalty never to atone.
Wilt thou not speak? I have debased myself,
This scorn of thine cannot abase me more.

KARINE. King Eric, rise. I'll not have thee abased.
If she forgets a woman's nature thus,
To scorn repentance, offer it no more;
Herself some day shall offer it in vain.

ERIC. I see thou slightest that which some account
The deepest imprecation of the oppressed,
The oppressor's anguish and a life's remorse.

KARINE. Come here behind me. She hath bent her gaze
At last on thee! Was ever such a look?
Scorn in her flinty eyes strikes fire from hate.
Here shelter from it. 'Tis the evil eye.

ERIC. Still art thou dumb? Karine, it must be said.
Though Sweden's laws fix ready-money price
For widowhood, and orphanage, and death,
And give despair a pocketful of change;
I'd not approach thee with such words, unless
Thyself compelledst me. Wilt thou have—

MALINE. Gold.

ERIC. Sooth, is it so! In half an hour thou shalt
Be richer than the treasury. My heart
Shall be unburdened, tons for every ounce.
Would I had been a miser all my life!

KARINE. Come quickly, and send every ounce thou hast,
And I will fling my crown into the bag.
Say not farewell: she will not answer thee.
How truly said I that she knew not love!

[*Exeunt* ERIC *and* KARINE. JOHN *advances.*

JOHN. Enter the king! Depart late king and queen!
He too shall fling his crown into the bag.

MALINE. His crown! I have suspicion thou dost mean
To rob me of his blood.

JOHN. Our lady aunt
Hath hardly learned all Christian virtues yet:
But 'tis not ours to teach her. I have sworn
To leave him wholly to thy sense of right.
Twice hath he flung into his cursed gaols

The noblest son of Sweden's greatest king;
But for that father's sake we pass it o'er.
Still if to thee it seemeth just and right
To bear in mind—

MALINE. Shall I keep their memory,
As men keep Easter, when the moon doth suit?
Or make it Christmas, and hang mistletoe
Above their graves, to kiss their murderer?
A madman, was he? Well, and what am I?
Will that restore my loss? Have I no right
To take some little mad-fit of my own,
And slay, and pay—I can afford it now—
And so the flower-wench have no market-wrong?
To look me in the face, and clasp the hands
That stabbed my son, and modulate the voice
That slew my husband; and then cast the score,
And pay in pictures of their murderer!
Now listen, John:—Thou art my sister's son—
(As if I wanted company of grief,
Or men could guess what desolation is)
When ye are parted from, or, like enough,
Yourselves do part with that affection's use
Whereof ye are more furnitured than fed;
What is it? A little grumbling at the damp,
Or want of tendance, in your new-made home.
But we, bereft, swept empty, ay and robbed
(No chastening heaven to me!) of that our all
We never can renew, or live without,
What have we, but to sit, and think, and moan,
Day after day until we waste away?
And no one recks how we may feel or look:
The weary pulse sounds like the step of time
(The only step that ever comes): and then
The listless mind, too weak to be controlled,
(Like dying hands that toy their last of life)
Brings trifles, each an agony, to the heart
Numbed, and worn out with aching. I'll not talk
Of this, lest I should break my vow and weep.

Enter Attendants with gold, &c.

JOHN. So here's the gold! Ho, ho, a goodly weight!
I trust 'tis pure. Now, better than I thought,
'Tis glittering with jewels, queenly jewels!

But scarce so neatly packed as they deserve.
Well, to our taste there is no finer sight.
Look!

MALINE. Look!

JOHN. Ah, we must keep this ruby heart!
And who could part with this?—What's here enwrapped
In wool so carefully? It is her crown.
Sweet modest pearls! I doubt she hath worn it much.
Ah, poor Karine, there's none could have the heart
To do thee harm.

MALINE. So then it is no harm
To be as I am!

JOHN. Every guilder here
Shall be new minted with our effigy
(Provided that they waste not much to melt):
And since thou scornest, like a real Sture,
These trinket things—why, they shall be our wife's.

MALINE. When shall we do it?

JOHN. To-morrow if we can.

MALINE. Pray God, I may not slur it greedily,
But sweet at leisure, so that every tooth
May have a taste, and every fibre feel.

JOHN. And we have some short horoscope to cast
With that astrologer—cursed hypocrite!—
So kindly anxious for our steward's son!—

MALINE. Lo daylight sickens from the prime of heaven,
A widow lagging down the slope of life;
But day no more than passeth to repose,
First, twilight's grey novitiate, and then
The quiet ritual of star-rosaried night.

JOHN. Thou, too, shalt be an abbess, and thy grief
Shall look from high upon a distant world.

MALINE. My beads are bloodstones, and my vow a curse.

ACT V.

SCENE I. — *The country near Stockholm.*

A conflict in the background. Enter ULF.

ULF. All up!—all up! as we used to say at "I spy," when I was a little boy, and had a little belly. Ah! how I could run in those days! What a cursed butcher's prentice style of fighting these oak-leaf fellows exhibit! If it comes to that, the army is gone to the dogs. To leap at a substantial householder of five-and-forty thus! I scorn to deal with you all. Why, a wolf could do no worse to a wretched babe who hath never learned the excellence of pork cracklings. Oh! to remember hot pork, when one hath not even bread! I am smitten!—I am stricken sore. If I bleed not in the breast—oh, spare-rib sword!—I water sadly from the mouth.

Enter THORLE *and the Royal Guard.*

THORLE. Fat skulk! what dost thou here? We charge with De Mornay. There is no other chance. Rescue!—rescue to the King!

ULF. Soldiers of the household!—Upland warriors!—shall a man be a dastard now? Onward, bold hearts! I will defend your rear. Headlong were I rushing in your front, if I had only cut my corns this week.

THORLE. Prick him on, Carl. He is a rare cheese down hill. The Dannebrog! The Dannebrog, and the Royal Guard! [*Exeunt omnes.*

Enter MALINE STURE *and* OLSON, *meeting.*

MALINE. Where is he? Have we caught him?
OLSON. I know not.
I only know I made a blow at him—
A terrible blow! It would have cleft a pollard!
A goodly vengeance for the house of Sture!
MALINE. What, man! Thou kill him!

OLSON. Nay, it would have, madam;
But I—maybe then I was skeared a little.
However, so it was: my poleaxe fell
Three ells behind: nor deigned he to turn
For peasant brunt; but with his proud neck thus,
(No, I can't do it like a king!) he swept
Right through our men, as 'twere a clover-patch;
Shouting, and challenging the Duke of Finland.
MALINE. Gave John the answer?
OLSON. As the wood-queist doth
To him who hollas up the ivied elm—
A rustle and a wing-flap.
MALINE. He is mine.
No one can harm him. But this speed of his?
They say he is so swift of foot, that nought—
Not e'en my curse could catch him if he fled.
Yeoman, is 't true?
OLSON. The lightest foot that won
From church, last Christmas-day, in all Nerike,
Ten landyards from the porch were five behind.
But fear not, madam, though all his men have fled
(Else e'en your ladyship might not keep me here),
He will not fly.
MALINE. Where is he, then? Where is he?
OLSON. Have I not said, he is behind our ranks,
Chasing—ah! he had never chased a Sture!
Back he must come; and we hold every pass
That gives upon the city.
MALINE. Hark! What's that?
OLSON. His cry—his battle-cry,—"Eric for St. Eric!"
Yeomen, Nerike! To meet him now, to meet him!
[*Yeomen, armed, pass through.*
One more such blow! Ah, 'twould have cleft a pollard!
YEOMEN. Fall in, old Olson, lads like thee are scarce.
OLSON. Madam, stay here; thou shalt see all in safety. [*Exeunt all but* MALINE.
MALINE. In safety! Well, my life hath value yet,
Until—Would God I were a man!—he comes,
All battle-sprent, and dinted, and bereeked—
Pallid as death, and as a spectre calm,
With every line of that abhorred face
Set adamant; and his plume as high and proud
As when he launched young knighthood on my Nils.

They shrink, they yield; he strews them right and left,
As we bestrewed his coronation-path.
God!—is there not one arm that hath the strength
Of a sucking babe? My brother, too—my brother!
My only and my last! There is no right!—
No God—no common shame in earth or heaven!

Enter CHARLES *and troops with the body of* COUNT LIONSHED.

CHARLES. Is this the lesson of revenge? Good aunt!
Dear aunt!—my mother's sister——
MALINE. Out, poor pup!
Sweet words to women of sweet hearts! Stare not;
Nor lay my newest keepsake here to spoil.
I'll not look on it. 'Tis dead—of course, 'tis dead!
Have they taken Eric?
CHARLES. Madam, they have.
MALINE. Show me.

SCENE II.—*Before Orby Castle.*

Night. ULF *on guard.* *Enter* THORLE.

THORLE. Ay, up and down, up and down; that's the way they go.
ULF. But we get our meat the same, whether they crow or croak.
THORLE. And yet I loved him as the apple of my eye!
ULF. And I, like an Allhallow's pippin stuck with pins!
THORLE. Go to!—thou art as sleek before his dungeon as behind his throne!
ULF. Take one week with another, I sweat about the same. The in-door work hath chairs and coal, but the out-door hath the true supper relish. Hast thou finished that shield of brawn? I never look upon the stars but I think of salt and mustard!
THORLE. Soho! Who comes here, flying through the gloom? [*Enter* ARGAND.
ULF. ['Tis a little man.] In the name of King John, stand there!
ARGAND. Oh spare me, mighty demon!

THORLE. Cousin Argand!
ARGAND. Oh, Thorle, I am so glad! I am wellnigh dead,
I was so frightened! Oh that I were home!
ULF. What is it, boy?
ARGAND. Captain, I never thought it.
I thought he would ave clutch'd a comet's mane,
Or Pegasus, or some high galloping star.
Forgive me, sir, but I forget their names;
I never dreamed he could be made to die!
THORLE. Who, who?
ARGAND. My master, Goran Peterson,
The great astrologer, the king of stars!
How will they ever know their business now?
THORLE. What of him? Quick!
ARGAND. They found him in a dike,
Down by the port—you know the southern sluice—
None dared lay hands on him: but forth he strode,
With famine gaunt, tattered, and stiff of joint,
But not a man to laugh at. There he stood,
By the first elbow of the seven-day stream:
Behind him, and above, and all around,
Logans, and tors, and cairns of granite, slabbed
With flaws of waning sunset, hushed the glen,
As for the entrance of a giant's ghost.
He stood, and shaking back the snow that is
As much of summer's as of winter's birth,
Fixed his stern eyes (ay, sterner then than ever)
Upon the pale east, where a rifted crag
Showed all of heaven he should ever see.
'Twas such a look, the boldest man who guards
The seven-isled city, the rock-sceptred queen,
Started, as I have seen a row of maids
Start from the plague-seal on a classmate's brow.
Thus while he glared, intent, as one who hath
Unfleshed his eyes at death, there came—dear Thorle,
Hold by my hand, God only keep me safe
Over this midnight, I'll spy heaven no more!—
ULF. What is it? There, there, man! No, between
the trees!
THORLE. Fool, 'tis a marten-cat. So then, what came?
ARGAND. 'Twas brighter than the sun, and larger than
The harvest-moon upon a fiord's edge,
And as it passed, it shook upon the sea

Big lumps of clotted blood and weltering hair,
They reckoned twenty (twenty hath he slain),
And one was like the face of Swanto Sture;
Towards him, nigher, and more nigh it came,
Then for one moment, even as he stood,
So stood it, another, and with a crash that shook
The earth, the ocean, and the sky, it burst,
And left no track upon the mild blue air;
But through that crash, and far above it, rang
A shriek—oh, shall I hear it in my sleep?

ULF. Come, let us hear the last of him.

ARGAND. Thou hast.
Albeit his eyes stood forth, like skulls on spikes,
And though the soldiers of King John were quick
To lash his body to four Gothland steeds,
Wild plunging colts, which split his arms and legs
From their red sockets and white fibred hold;
They did but thresh the chaff: his soul had spent
At least five minutes of the eternal hell.

THORLE. Such be the murderer's and the sorcerer's fate!

ARGAND. I'll never look upon the stars again,
Except to thank their Maker and my own.
Good night! I see a fellow-traveller pass. [*Exit* ARGAND.

THORLE. How I have wasted time! And my poor king
(No longer thine or Sweden's) comes not forth.
Strange that he walks not on the accustomed edge
Of yon high parapet outside his cell!
He would have been there since the early dusk,
Had he but known what visitor is nigh.

ULF. Now mind, dear Thorle, I have no hand in this.
If thou dost risk, for sweet Betuna's love,
Or money, or some young romance, to bring
The outcast lady to her husband's side,
I see it not. 'Tis much too rash for me.

THORLE. Come here! I see him on his prison-walk.
How pale, and still untended of his wound!

ULF. Mind, I'm not sentinel upon the lake.
[*They retire. Enter* ERIC *above.*

ERIC. Night, once more night, and this great king alive!
To watch the twilight, grey-haired scrivener,

Burnish the seals of the vivid bond of night;
That muniment eternal, signed of him,
To whom, the stars amassing heaven with gold,
The scarped moon, and the broad laminous sun,
Were else the worn-out tinsel of his skirt:
Whom in our larger moments (when himself
Vouchsafes), the homebound spirit may descry,
If she hath kept her crystal lenses pure:
But mine—ah, can I hope that bitter tears,
And lone abasement, and deep-anguished prayer,
May feebly guide me homeward, all too late
For earthly purpose, but in time for heaven?
Then would I gladly antedate mine end
(If it were distant, which I know 'tis not),
And pass from hatred, and revenge, and scorn,
The night-wind of suspicion, and of fear,
And all the passions, and the weariness,
The paroxysms, and slow relapse of life:
But that it is our best infirmity
To draw unto us (closer than by hand)
Weak ones, who have no welfare but in us,
And grow more dear, by trembling in our arms.
And mine—though I must leave them here forlorn—
Yet would I see them, ere I quit my hold.
Thou lake, of eyots green, and lilied wells,
Whereon we floated, through the wooing hours,
Becalmed in earnest idleness of love;
Ye stars, whom once I impiously assayed,
All I would know of destiny is this,
Shall my Karine come see me ere I die?
Hark! the clear aerial voice! 'Tis hers;
And song of days, when time was melody.
Now keep the skiff within the shadowy marge;
To pass unseen is all the weak may crave.
She glides—how boldly!—up the willow reach,
All robed in white, a vision of the lake;
To guards a sprite, to me a woman true;
And what she singeth is no dream to us.

[*Repeats, or* KARINE *sings.*

Yon high moon doth forsake
Tidal sea and billow,
And hath in this one lake
Mirror and pillow.

So, love, gaze thou on me,
From bright youth to dim age;
And herein thou shalt see
Peace and thine image.

And now the crescent of our love is full,
Hath pierced its mirror, and pervades the deep.
[*Re-enters his cell.*

SCENE III.—*Dungeon in Orby Castle.*

ERIC. *Enter* KARINE.

ERIC. Once more my poor one!
KARINE. Yes, to die with thee.
They shall not part us ever, ever more.
ERIC. Hast thou been sad without me?
KARINE. Without thee!
ERIC. And none to guard or love her! Is it true
They drove thee forth with basket on thy arm,
And made thee curtsey to the miners' trulls,
And sell them pennyroyal and fool's pride?
Ah, my own outrage! but 't was wreaked on men.
KARINE. To save our child I did whate'er they pleased.
ERIC. Our boy! Where is he?
KARINE. Borne, in peasant dress,
Beyond the frontier, in De Mornay's charge.
ERIC. My baby exile, God preserve thee sane,
Discrowned of pride, but monarch of thy mind!
KARINE. Thou art my child, my father, and myself,
And, lo, thou hast thy kingdom still in me.
Poor wistful eyes, what flash they still at "King?"
Wan cheeks and drooping locks! I used to say,
We two should ne'er count silver hairs together;
But now, when scarce his summer-tide is come,
My royal ermine taketh winter's suit!
Come, cheer thee, love, since we have met again,
And praise my craft in stealing thee a friend,
(*produces wine*)
As strange, and more forgotten than myself:
A little wine shall coax thy evening smile,
And call the vintage sun to dungeoned eyes.

Oh, thy poor side! And hiding it from me!
How was it? Thou hast wanted me.
ERIC. Stenbock
Came, like a man, and shot me where I sat.
KARINE. Fierce dastard! Let me bind it for thee, love.
ERIC. It is not worth the while. Karine, of yore
My heart's own maid, and now my bosom's wife,
My spirit's lull, my stormy soul's repose,
Sweet bird still singing on a fallen tree,
[I cannot tell her.]
KARINE. What! what is it, Eric?
ERIC. Cling not so anguished. I am with thee yet.
Look up, and let us calmly gaze awhile,
To fix the image which must serve so long:
For I must leave Karine, and pass away
Beyond her care, and out of sight of love.
KARINE. Go where thou wilt, if it shall be in life
I'll keep thy side; if death, I'll follow thee,
And close behind, lest spirits should forget.
And yet—to think how different that may be!
Eric, thou lovest me too well to jest.
Ah, 't was to try me.—I endured it well.
Now praise my firmness, dear, and clasp me safe
From such a frightful jest.
ERIC. It is the truth.
And here they come to shift the latest scene
Of this more tragic than heroic life.
Now wife be calm, and prove thyself a queen.
Albeit, in immortal heraldry,
Rank starts anew from peerage sword of death.

Enter MALINE *and the* GOVERNOR *of the Castle.*

MALINE. At last, at last! I am put off no more.
And now—what both? How came this woman here?
GOVERNOR. I know not. I have——
MALINE. Taken bribes, I see.
But never fear. 'Tis all the sweeter thus.
Behold the atonement which thy gold hath bought!
Wilt thou have—death from brage-cup of the Stures?
First look, how young and fair, and sure to thrive
On Stockholm pavement, this thy queen is left;
Then drink to all thou hast on earth besides,
An outcast child, a murderer's fame and grave.

KARINE. I'll not degrade thy sovereign's latest hour
By prayer to thee, poor wicked-hearted fool,
Who hast too small a spirit to forgive.
MALINE. Oh, gentle dealer in the flowers of speech!
Well, give her room to weave her cypress-wreath.
[MALINE *and the Governor retire.*
KARINE. Now hath she freed us from our deepest curse,
The wrong that lay so heavy on our souls.
Come, dearest, I have ever shared with thee;
I'll share this parting and uniting draught;
God will forgive me. I have wrought my life.
ERIC. My brave Karine, to 'scape this short farewell,
Thou shalt not risk eternal union.
For me, no leap, or sudden plunge is here,
But calm advance where long my gaze hath been,
And where the light brain wandereth no more.
A few short minutes, and I do from high
Repay thy watch, and minister return.
KARINE. Let friends and neighbours thus shake hands and part,
Cousins, or consorts of an equal birth,
Where smooth esteem hath come and gone in peace.
Placid regrets, and questions of the sky,
"Ah, doth he see me now?" and moonlight sighs,
Or hearts of rock, with no more voice for grief
Than echo hath for sunset.—
Away with resignation! Ne'er will I
Make up my mind to anything but thee.
Forgive me; frown not, that I cannot help
To cling and falter on thy calmer path:
Nor think this foolish burst another proof
How little I was fit to be thy wife.
A poor, impulsive, earnest thing was I,
That learned, but never understood, to love,
And, being touched by very simple means,
Forgot that all the world is not so weak.
Then, if it was my folly to expect
A king to be like me, at least forbear
To smile me off, and say "Farewell, Karine."
ERIC (*aside*). A little more, and I must yield her wish.
KARINE. Oh break-heart pride! oh, cumbrous armour pride!

What use art thou in the desert of my loss?
I'll fall, and weep, and pray before her knees,
As she were Mercy, and myself the sin,
And cry that she is of such adamant,
All, all her loss is but a forfeit joke,
Compared to thy loss to weak-minded me.
Let me go to her.

ERIC. Keep thy precious pearls,
Unless the lady hath sworn not to laugh.

KARINE. To kill me vilely is what she hath sworn.
And is it crime to sweeten bitter death,
And win the imperious visitor a guest?
Then leave me half. No dregs of life for me!

ERIC. Hath yonder fury sworn? Then 'scape with me.
Thus quaff we calm, like travellers at relay,
But count no more the leagues we have to roam. [*Drinks.*

KARINE. Thus quaff we blest, like sweethearts at the May,
But pledge no more, since we have won our home. [*Drinks.*

ERIC. I tread the mighty avenue of death,
With foliage of ancestral ages strewn;
Fling back the poor complaining hinge of life,
A thousand time-long mysteries are glass.
The doubts, the sneers, and sophistries, that would
Make suicide of our immortality,
Pluck from this furrowed clod its harvest-home,
And spend the mind in proving that it rots,—
These, and their world, are now become to me
The hum of school upon a grandsire's ear,
Or distant babble of a waded brook.

KARINE. But me? Oh, fling not all the world aside!
No sneers or doubts have ever dwelt with me;
Keep me, at least, within thy dying heart.

ERIC. Fear not, my true one; can I seek in vain
For thee in realms where everywhere is home?
Larger, and larger still! and thou art there.
Thy mortal swathings can I see no more;
But, o'er the void, a purer image wafts
Yet brighter presence, and yet sweeter love. [*Dies.*

KARINE. I'll catch that smile a welcome ere it fades,
A happy welcome, not unto a throne.
Thine eyes are violets, winter-proofed in snow;
Withdraw them, love, from black frost of the world,

To ope with mine above the path of winds. [*Closes them.*
True violets blossom only from the root.
Cold, and so calm! I come to make it bliss. [*Dies.*

MALINE (*advancing*). Now may I weep, and nothing else to do;
Life without aim, and tears without a zest,
Except to envy this united rest.

MOUNT ARAFA.

[Mount Arafa, situated about a mile from Mecca, is held in great veneration by the Mussulmans, as a place very proper for penitence. Its fitness in this respect is accounted for by a tradition that Adam and Eve, on being banished out of Paradise in order to do penance for their transgression, were parted from each other: and after a separation of six score years, met again upon this mountain.—*Ockley's History of the Saracens*, p. 60.]

MOUNT ARAFA.

THE PARTING.

I.

Forth and beyond the golden gate
(The golden gate to iron changed,
With every bar a flaming plate)
The two were wandering on, estranged,
And desolate.

Their minds were stricken dim and weak,
Else had they marvelled much, and pondered
Things new, and sad, and hard to speak,
Nor least the stranger drops that wandered
On either cheek.

Oh, pearls of the diseasèd mind,
The first that ever formed and fell,
Thenceforth, in any human shell,
Not very deep to find!

II.

The father of a world unborn
(But sire of death or ere of life)
Plods vaguely onward, wan and worn,
With little heart for the long strife,
To toil and mourn.

Though still without a name for grief,
One hour hath taught him all its meaning;
But pointed not the high belief
Which, nursed by hope, and labour's weaning,
Wafteth relief.

O foot, set down it recks not where,
O hand, that gropes for some support,
Your way and work are not so short,
As to dispense with care.

III.

The mother of ten million homes
(Thereafter to be made and lost)
Is sadly following where he roams,
In fevered longing to accost,
Yet never comes:

For shame is burning on her face,
And shrinking in a shower of tresses,
And throbbing shy with new disgrace,
The breast, where late the love that blesses
Held only place.

Ye eyes, that beam with lustre strange,
And never tried your power till now,
How seldom shall ye gem a brow
That knoweth not to change!

IV.

The houseless monarch of the earth
Hath quickly found what empire means;
For while he scoffs in bitter mirth,
And curseth, after Eden's scenes,
This dreary dearth,

A snake, that twined in sportive zeal,
But yester morn, around his ankle,
Now forced along the dust to steal,
Steals nigh, and leaves its venomed rankle
Deep in his heel.

He stoops awhile. He seeks anon
For comfort to this first of pain,
Where ever since we men are fain,
He seeks—but Eve is gone!

PART I.—ADAM.

O'ER hill, and dale, and brambled plain,
A hundred years he seeks in vain;
O'er hill and dale, a hundred years,
He pours the sorrow no one hears:
Yet finds, as wayward mourners do,
A pleasure to pronounce his woe.

I.

"Ye crags, that watch the heaven above,
Ye brooks, that spy the lowest glen,
Your echoes and your murmurs prove
Some answering impulse sweeps you, when
Ye hear of love.

"Ye flowers, whom she used to tend,
Ye forest leaves, that kiss and whisper,
Your tremblings and your blushes lend
Some hope, that ye would try to lisp her,
Your true love's friend.

"O Nature, all that shapeth sound,
Or mutely breathes into the soul,
Come aid me; or at least condole,
Until my love be found.

II.

"Am I the king of all I view,
This earth aflush with gold and green,
Whereon descends the limpid blue,
And thoughtful waters, set between,
Shape all anew;

"And yonder sun, now past his prime,
Yet more majestic as he waneth,
And boweth calm assent to time
(His usher) that awhile he deigneth
Let others climb?

"Yet shedding first a rich farewell
Upon the leaves, his yearly gift,
Which furtive winds lurk by to lift,
And glide away to tell:

III.

"And doth yon chaste, ungarnished moon
Come for these eyes alone to see,
A light, a solace, and a boon,
As once my Eve arose on me,
To set, how soon!

"And all the now detested brood,
That issue from their cavern-dwelling,
Forget their names and herbage food,
Aprowl, and ravenous, and yelling,
For human blood?

"Then I, the king of all this scene,
Would weep my sceptre twain with rust,
And (like the serpent) writhe in dust,
Only to find my queen!

IV.

"Alone, alone, and all uncheered
By that divine inspiring voice,
Which held my thrilling soul insphered
In bliss, too utter to rejoice,
When He appeared!

"Cast forth, as well, from lowlier bliss
Of things, wherewith I held communion;
The thought, how all alive would miss
My early step and evening union,
Is come to this!

"Alone, and reft of her, who yet
Was mine, when all the rest had failed,
And haply had in time prevailed
To teach me to forget!

V.

"I know not, if I did o'erprize,
O'er him who gave, that wondrous gift,
Forsake, for beauty, nobler ties,
And hold my manhood little thrift,
To woman's eyes:

"But if I did, the keener galls
This lorn and weary expiation,
The more her loveliness enthrals,
The sadder is the desolation
Which now befalls.

"Suffice my sins; I'll not approve
A thought which slighteth my poor Eve:
Suffice my sins; I'll not believe,
That it is one to love.

VI.

"Oh love, if e'er this endless plain,
Where I must sweat with plough and spade,
Shall hold a people, sprung from twain,
Or made more pure, by Him who made
That pair in vain,

"Shall any feel, as I have felt,
Thy pang of bliss, and raptured anguish,
The pleasing doubts, that burn, and melt,
The grief to thrive, the joy to languish,
The holy guilt?

"If so, then may the lover's heart
(Which breeds internal cares enough)
At least be spared the world's rebuff,
To keep the twain apart."

Awhile he ceased; for scorching woe
Had made a drought of sorrow's flow.
He sat, beside his scanty stock,
Upon the unimpressive rock;
A glance thereon woke thoughts of home,
And touched him with a lonelier gloom.

VII.

"Home! What is home? Of old I thought
(When but to sit and think was bliss)
That all created things, untaught,
Should find their best account in this—
To treasure nought;

"But join or sever, rest or roam,
Each new access a common blessing,
Each old resort, where friends have come,
A free delight, and not confessing
The name of home.

"But now, each creature seeks a nest
Retired from the week-day road,
Wherein to cherish his abode,
And have a right to rest.

VIII.

"To me this earth, so late consigned,
Is but a foe to be subdued:
Ah, stubborn mass! Ah, feeble mind,
That hath to make and mould the good
It cannot find!

"No heart for work, no artist pride;
My hands must drudge without aspiring;
What use, when there is none beside
To come and help me, by admiring
Whate'er I tried?

"Then fold thy hands, and curse thy load;
Let brambles thrive, and roses grieve:
Home meaneth two. Without my Eve,
The world is but a road.

IX.

"God, who hast said it is not good,
For man, thy work, to be alone,
Is everlasting solitude,
When once united bliss was known,
A livelier food?

"The thoughts, which thou hast planted free,
Consume the life whence they are feeden,
As once, that too attaining tree
Made howling wilderness of Eden,
And clay of me.

"Oh, fool I am! Oh, rebel worm!
If, when immortal, I was slain,
For daring to impugn His reign,
How shall I, thus infirm?

X.

" Yet since this mind survived its theft,
Though narrowed to a selfish verge,
I trow it hath a season left,
To weld and wield, to add and purge,
And try its heft:

" With none before it, to suggest
The tides and landmarks of endeavour,
And haply none behind, to test
If aught deserve to last for ever;
All maiden quest!

" With something looming dark ahead:
And who shall know, a whit the more,
What fruit we pluck, when we explore
What meaneth, to be dead?

XI.

" Thou mind, a goaled but guideless thing,
So touched at hazard, yet so deep,
Attracting oft a spirit's wing
To come and fan thee in thy sleep,
And wake one string;

" Howe'er thy myriad impulse stray
(Would take ten thousand years to study)
Be taught to keep the golden way,
With truth's advancing sunshine ruddy,
And heaven's day;

" Be taught thereon, from out the haze
Of wondering what thou art, and whence,
To urge habitual step of sense,
And fix a leading gaze.

XII.

" Then hope shall gleam askance, and give
My ripening fruit a sunny cheek,
And buds in afternoon revive
To pearly down, and damask sleek,
And corn shall thrive.

" A paradise of sweet perfume
(The sweeter that it cost some labour)
Shall breathe into the woodbined room,
Which holds one dearer than a neighbour,
To share its bloom.

" And while we sit, or wander, there,
We'll point the gardening of distress,
How cultured ' love-in-idleness'
Becomes a heartsease fair."

New courage stirred the first of men;
He strung his limbs to strength again;
Forgot a hundred years of ill,
And set his face to climb the parting hill.

PART II.—EVE.

Meanwhile along the humbler vale,
The helpless Eve pursued her tale;
Not fierce and chafed, but well content
To own the righteous punishment;
Yet found, as quiet mourners do,
A pleasure to peruse her woe.

I.

"Ye grottoes and ye waters calm,
That copy fairer all ye see,
And waving elegance of palm,
That plumes above its neighbour tree,
Come give me balm.

"Ye slender flagons of the moss,
Whose only wine is dew-drop limpid,
Hath touched on you, or passed across
This lady-fern, so curled and crimpèd,
Step of my loss?

"Ye birds, that soar to heaven's gate,
Or flitting o'er the summer sea
Bring back the news in melody,
Ye must have seen my mate.

II.

" Am I the queen of all I view,
This earth asmile with tender thought,
Whereon reposes quiet hue
Of evening, wrapped in mantle wrought
Of chastened blue.

" Nor eager yet to weave her hair
(Which falls in deepening shadow-masses),
With chrysolites of lustre fair,
Whose sparkling multitude surpasses
All we can wear.

" But makes her entry, sweet, and shy,
Persuading, ere she claims, her state,
And dewy gifts propitiate
The placid earth and sky:

III.

" And doth yon star, the sun hath left,
With counsel for the young-faced moon,
Mark only me on earth, bereft
Of all to counsel, and so soon,
By this hand's theft?

" And creatures, all that flit or creep,
Along the flow of night's dusk river,
Quit cavern-home, and ivy-keep,
With drowsy hum, like shafts from quiver
Of loose-strung sleep?

" Then I this queen, so all alone,
Reject the nobler spirit-life,
And only keep the name of wife,
To be the slave of one.

IV

" Oh, where is he,—all weary worn,
On shouldered hill, or chasm brink,
Or prostrate, too chastised to mourn,
And listless, or to choose, or shrink,
Win, or be lorn?

" Alas, that he had time to know
(Though joy was yet unpropped by trouble),
How smiles that travel to and fro,
Take brighter gleam, and honey double,
And deeper glow!

" Alas, that he had time to learn
That none, of all the sounds that fly,
More needs an echo than a sigh,
And tears unmingled burn!

V.

" It could not be these earthly charms
(If charms they are) that made him fond
To shelter me within his arms,
And have no wish, or thought, beyond
The love that calms:

" But something deep, that did enshrine
(Though stronger was his own and higher),
Within this soul, his spirit's eyne,
And gave him somewhat to admire,
And love, in mine.

" Oh spirit-looks, that dwelt within
A heart, that lived to be your home,
And would none else, lest ye should roam,
Are ye estranged by sin?

VI.

"Ah sin, that ever hence shalt move
The bower affection once possessed,
And (howsoe'er unstained it prove)
Set one dark feather in the breast
Of purest dove;

"At least forbear to wound the trust
(Which being stricken, love must vanish),
At least permit the kindred dust
To keep twin dew-drops still, nor banish
All, except lust:

"That so, a comfort may begin
To gleam on her who stole his heaven,
The thought that erring Eve was given,
Not only for a sin."

Awhile she ceased: remembrance dark
Had flooded o'er affliction's mark.
When, proudly tripping o'er the lawn,
Came mother hind and lovely fawn;
Thereat began unhappy Eve,
With new emotioned tears, to grieve.

VII.

"And am I destined ne'er to learn
A parent's proud creative joy,
The love that makes a mother yearn
O'er that mysterious treasure-toy
Her pains do earn!

"And half afraid to speak or stir,
Lest e'en the softest kiss endanger
(The while two clinging hearts confer)
That dainty, fresh, and wondering stranger,
Come home to her;

"Or haply fathoming for news
Of starry worlds, in eyes so clear,
She finds a nearer likeness there,
That makes her own suffuse.

VIII.

"Oh joy, that shall all joys excel!
Oh gush of Nature's deepest fount,
Whereby that else unlifted well
Shall into column'd beauty mount,
And music's swell;

"I only know thee by the want
To feel thy sweet responsive thrilling;
The fountain pours no liquid chant
For me, from out the heart so willing
To be its haunt.

"I little dreamt when I assayed
To steal a knowledge of the good
And ill, by impious hardihood,
How much the ill outweighed!

IX.

"Still dreaming! Not content to weep
The loss of tasted happiness;
Can I not let the future sleep,
Without the wish to dream or guess,
What store it keep?

"As if it were not care enough
To lose my better part of being,
And wander o'er the bleak and rough,
With none to aid me, ever fleeing
Mine own rebuff!

"And worse—with none to tell me how
The empty world hath fared with him,
Who cannot weep his sorrows dim,
A man—a mortal now!

X.

" And yet for all remaineth one,
Who seeth what we feel and lack;
Albeit we ourselves have done
Our worst, to make him turn his back
And succour none:

" Still bendeth he a kind regard
From yon eternal clear pavilion;
And, though our way be long and hard,
Our ills a thousand, cares a million,
And heaven is barred,

" A time shall be, when seems Him meet,
To cut the knot from off the scourge,
To salve and fan, as well as purge,
And rest the wandering feet.

XI.

" And if hereafter (as there must
Since He, our Maker, so hath sworn)
From that whereof we are—the dust—
And whereunto we shall return,
In higher trust,

" There spring a grand and countless race,
Replenishing this vast possession;
Till life shall win a larger space
Than death, by quick and fair succession
Of health and grace:

" They too shall find, as I have found,
The grief, that lifts its head on high,
A dewy bud the sun shall dry,
But not while on the ground.

XII.

"Then smiles again shall arch their bow—
The lips that loose the silver shaft—
And chaliced fancy, once aflow,
Require no words whereon to waft
Her ambient glow:

"Like scents that steal without the wind,
Her dewy freshness sweet and tender
Shall float unvoiced, nor leave behind
The grace too airy, frail, and slender,
For stranger mind.

"And sometime shall a bolder gale
Of transport stir the flower'd trees,
And set their fruit—nor least of these,
To tell this sorrow's tale!"

New comfort touched the first of wives,
She smiles, and drooping hope revives;
Forgets a hundred years of pain,
And sets her face to cross the severing plain.

THE MEETING.

I.

THE crescent moon is high and bright,
More stars on heaven than may be told,
The buds of spring embrace the light,
Which sweetly tempts them to unfold,
And trust the night.

What shadow falls upon the sward
Of Arafa, the mountain lonely,
And gathering human shape, toward
So swiftly glides? It can be only,
Only her lord!

What form is that, too frail to leave
On Arafa, the mountain lone?
More nigh it glides. It can be none
Except his own dear Eve!

II.

I'll not attempt, with earth's alloy
Of years six thousand on my quill,
To tell his gratitude and joy,
The thoughts that throb, and words that thrill,
But never cloy:

Far less assay her swooning bliss,
And weeping ecstasy of pleasure:
For both have told (howe'er amiss)
Their depth of grief—the only measure
Of joy like this.

And if that fail, then let the heart
Of any, their remotest child,
Conceive, that knows the anguish wild
To love and be apart.

ST. PAUL AT ATHENS.

ST. PAUL AT ATHENS.

ATHENIAN trifler, sceptic of thy creed,
Yet keen to prove by everything but deed,
To whom the garb of candour is uncouth,
And novelty must strow the steps of truth,
Forsake Eudoxian grove and terrace shade
Of Stoic wisdom's afternoon parade,
Where cavil asks, and irony replies,
And every thesis hath its maxim'd lies.
And ye, whose suasion hopes a dearer aim
Than fervid audience or didactic fame,
Though conscious of a more than chance resort
Once more repress the long-embosomed thought,
And haste where legends haunt the altar sods,
The hill of Mars, the tribune-seat of gods.

Who stands thereon is not of heavenly race,
Majestic stature, or ideal grace,
Nor rich in popular smiles, as might behove
The fabled envoy of licentious Jove,
But steadfast, calm, with high resolve imprest,
As one who bears the living God's behest;
His earnest eyes the spirit's zeal avow,
And garner'd thought hath left a furrowed brow;
And, lo! while busy mockers gaze askance,
Suffusing pity dims the inspired glance:
Alone he meets the Sophist throng, nor fears
To cope the foiling panoply of sneers,
The wit that oft redeems the memory's pledge,
And temper'd reason's syllogistic edge.
Jehovah's champion lacks no shrewd address,
Begirt with truth, and mailed in righteousness,

The shield of faith shall quench the fiery darts,
The Spirit's sword cleave adamantine hearts;
Yet where he treads embattled terrors cease,
And mountains hail the sandal steps of peace.

Behold yon sister hill! the virgin-fane
Hath fenced the void from half her chaste domain,
While on each side, the pillar'd vista through,
Gleams in a marble verge aërial blue;
In front majestic semblance breathes on high,
The rival Godheads leaning from the sky;
Neighs the wild steed the mean award to brave,
And monarchs shrink before their destined slave.
What! can there be ambition in a god,
And all it craves, to name a salient clod?
Not long, I trow, shall superstitious awe
From yonder pile the quailing glance withdraw,
For Paul hath marked the glorious disgrace,
And all the kindling soul illumes his face;
He lifts the arm by heavenly aid bested,
And wakes the voice that shall reclaim the dead.

"Ye men of Athens, armed to fight the air,
To trust the dark, and doubt where all is clear;
Whose haughty reach hath quenched perception's ray,
The spark of nature on your twilight way,
Blind leaders of the blind, in vague default,
Ye grope the maze of Superstition's vault;
For you the earth, the air, the waves, are fraught
With powers that menace all and promise naught.
Of late I passed where crowding votaries trod,
And lo, an altar 'To the Unknown God!'
Whom then ye worship nameless, and unproved,
His gifts unthanked, his excellence unloved,
Him will I manifest, Supreme, Alone,
The Almighty Father, the Eternal One,
Realmed inaccessible, but ever nigh,
The present God, the Dayspring from on high.
He lived while yet there was no life but His,
He made of nothing everything that is,
The swift light flashing through the dazzled void,
The earth unzoned, unbalanced, and unbuoyed;

Her yearly voyage He shaped, and o'er her bent
The unechoing arch, the crystal firmament,
And shut the seas their warder capes between,
And garbed the purple hills and valleys green;
Then lifted the creating arm on high,
And scattered worlds like dust upon the sky,
Empowered the sun, and graced the moon with light,
And stars that watch the slumbering fold of night:
No trident swung, nor cleft the several birth,
But spake the word, and quickened the young earth,
Each life astir with instinct of its kind,
Unvexed by thought, yet compensate of mind.
Then last, and paramount of the wondrous plan,
He made of dust, in God's own image, man,
At first a friend, in bliss and glory placed,
Ere long a rebel, anguished and abased,
From heavenly commune sunk to earthly scope,
And driven beyond the verge of all but hope.

"And shall the vast energic Spirit crave
A roof to shield him, or a tool to grave,
He, whom the heaven of heavens cannot hold,
Be tabernacled in a plaster mould?
Whose hand at first bestows our cradled breath,
Withdraws it, and red youth is pale in death,
Can we requite Him with our full-grown nerve,
Or hath He need which manhood's arm may serve?
Far as the utmost corners of the earth,
Wide as her reach, and ample as her girth,
O'er crag, and valley, grove, and dreary wild,
Blithe in their homes, or sadly reconciled,
A thousand nations leave their scant record,
Sons of one sire, and creatures of one Lord:
He who hath made, hath held disposal still,
Their acts His purpose, and their fate His will,
Hath fixed their place, and limited their day,
When each should quicken, tower, and decay;
The many chase some fancied joy or good,
And ever mix their object with their mood;
The wiser few, more certain where they tend,
Through lives of toil achieve a worthless end.
So he hath willed, that humbler minds may know
There is no consummation here below,

And seek, and feel, if haply they may come
To Him their God, their resting-place, and home.

" Nor while His servants keep this earthly state,
Hath He ordained to leave them desolate,
But whatsoe'er the seeming chance betide,
Our God is never too remote to guide:
In Him alone we live, and move, and are,
And feel His empire in a Father's care;
For we, as certain of your poets sung,
Of one birth are, and from one Maker sprung.
Then vaunt no parentage of local sod,
The sons are ye the immediate born of God."

Awhile he paused; no word the silence brake,
Till sage to sage in earnest whisper spake,
Though half convinced, reluctant to declare
The reach of centuries a grasp of air:
But warmly kindle to the voice of truth,
Impulsive mind and sanguine heart of youth,
They press around, by deep inquiry stirred,
Forget the past, and drink the living word,
Yet somewhat more of hope and counsel ask,
At once the apostle saw and chose the task;
While bearded age and manhood gather near,
And mothers lift their wondering babes to hear.

" How long shall heirs immortal, heaven's kin,
Themselves do despite to their origin,
And born of God, thus reprobate their birth,
Fain (if so was) to make the Godhead earth?
Or dream we still that beaten gold can be,
And silver cool into a deity,
As peradventure even ye accord
A stone engraven by yourselves your Lord?
So long the God of gods hath veiled His glance.
Nor seemed Him good to mark our ignorance;
But now He speaketh from on high, nor still
Forgets His promise, or forbears His will.
Give ear, ye sons of men, arise, repent,
The morn is nigh, and far the midnight spent;
Wake, earth, and heaven, for He hath fixed a day,
When heaven shall melt, and earth shall pass away.

Then God's own Son, who late incarnate trod
A mortal path, though still co-equal God,
O'er sovereign powers and subject thrones shall tread,
Begirt to recompense the quick and dead:
All we must stand before His judgment-seat,
And every eye His strict regard shall meet;
He shall fulfil His covenant, and bare
His arm unto the vengeance which he sware.
Whereof we hap not on a human truth,
A sage's inkling, or a dream of youth,
No maiden's trance, or legend of a bard,
But glorious certainty of full reward.
Nigh is our goal, and onward as we press,
Encompassed by a cloud of witnesses,
Not darkly mirror'd, or afar, we view,
But face to face the living God ensue;
Whom the Almighty Father raised from death,
And trampled the power of the grave beneath;
Then He our Saviour mounted upon high,
And hath led captive our captivity:
To be the firstfruit of all them which slept,
And earnest of the heavenly mansions kept.
And we, as many as have sojourned here,
In warfare of the flesh, in hope, and fear,
Shall shake off this corruption, and arise
Robed in immortal life, and conquerors of the skies."

Seemed while he spake, as though descending flame
Dwelt on his brow, and lit the ennobled frame.
But ah! how coldly falls the voice of life,
On ears that itch for umpireship of strife:
"What can it be that after long decay,
When worms have rioted on the tainted clay,
Or fire hath left a little dust behind,
Scarce visible, scarce a weight upon the wind,
Shall come embodied from earth, air, and sea,
From scattered death, a living unity?
Belike such resurrection shall be true,
When Athens lives awakened by a Jew."
So scoff the crowd, whose low material sense
In coarser marvels pardons the offence.
The rest, who still assert Minerva's race,
And haunt, but cannot fill, their fathers' place,

(From those of old how far degenerate—
Sculptors of thought, and architects of fate,)
Poor Cyclics these, who pound the gems that gleam
Through Zerdusht legend or Platonic dream,
And loosely force their own insipid graft
Of Gnostic myth on academic craft,
Then arrogate the crude but maudlin fruit,
The golden apple from Titanic root:
At once for them too humble and too high,
Wisdom is folly, and the truth a lie.
Ye fools, and blind, of mental power vain,
That most delights to sift and spurn the grain,
In whom the soul, that should maintain its kind,
Unheeded sleeps beneath the usurping mind;
Can ye know truth's sublimity, uncaught
By cubit reach, or dizzy gaze of thought?
Such truth whoso of mortals shall have made
At reason's gate bend her immortal head,
May fix the pole-star to his roof, or look
To gauge the heavens in a ruffled brook.

Still shall the sage in learned cumbrance plod,
And toil to mar his natural sense of God;
Still, as of old, the noblest and the best
Shalt thou, O Athens, banish from thy breast:
Lo, thine Apostle seeks the kinder wave,
And leaves in sorrow he who came to save!
Lo, gazing wistful from the olive shore
The few who grieve to see his face no more!
A purer palm shall Damaris obtain
Than basket-votaress, or Athena's train;
And Dionysius hath been chosen one
Among the elders of a heavenly throne,
A court which hath no night-enshadowed sway,*
Itself the noon of a perennial day.
For thee, Apostle, coped with mortal scathe,
A legate's proof hath armed a pilgrim's faith;
And if this trivial scene thy thoughts employ,
'Tis but to count the exceeding weight of joy:
Thou seest beyond, when earthly tempests break,
The heaven that twice hath opened for thy sake:

* Lucian and Clearchus assert that the sittings of the Areopagus were held in the dark.

Sole vessel of the flesh, irradiate
With spirit that hath passed the seventh gate,
Nor wist of quittance bodily, though caught
To things which hap not on the environed thought:
No other eye hath seen, nor ear hath heard,
Nor durst thyself who saw to speak the word;
For still the crown in angel-hands shall glow,
Till sorrow's balm anoint the Christian brow;
Again shall God enhance thy visual scope,
And franchised memory but interprets hope.

POOR ENGLISHMAN!

"The name of Englishman has become a by-word."
German Newspaper, Dec. 1853.

I.

"Thou trembling, way-worn, homeless man,
Whose only pulse is passion's throb;
So eager still to lead the van
Of all who lie beneath a ban,
Whose name is legion, or mob;

"However pure thy motives be,
Thou art not in a happy trance:
I pity Englishmen in thee—"
"I am a refugee of France!"

II.

"Thou haughty yet degraded lord,
So conscious of each stranger's mien,
Whose self-respect can scarce afford
To look upon that ancient sword,
That doth precede thy country's queen;

"Although the fault be not thine own,
No bliss can live in such disdain:
For humbled Albion I groan—"
"I am a first grandee of Spain."

III.

"Thou man of accents soft and sweet,
Of graceful port, and rapid eye;
Whereunder lurks a cavern'd heat,
More burns, than sparkles, at the treat,
When foreign uniforms come by;

" 'Tis absence makes thy heart grow fond
For freedom so afar from thee:
Alas, lies England thus in bond?—"
"I am a prince of Italy!"

IV.

" Oh grand and intellectual brow,
For which no visions are too queer;
That dives beneath the darkest flow
Of nature, with a spud and hoe,
And masters everything but beer;

" Thou gropest whale's-eggs thus, because
The air of heaven is not for thee:
Alas for Albion's cruel laws!"—
"I am a German entity!"

V.

" Thou flat-nosed, crouching, vermined thing,
In gangrened fat and strap-oil drowned;
With superstition's hog-ring clout
Upon thy soul, to keep its snout
From grubbing, even in the ground;

" I'll not pretend that e'er I can
(Thou clod enfleshed in filth and scurf)
Mistake thee for an Englishman."—
"Kick me, I am a Russian serf!"

VI.

" Ho step, so planted as the earth
Were but a pedestal for thee;
And glance that flashes little mirth,
But steady watch of freedom's hearth,
And noble self-sufficiency;

" What need to mark, within thine eyes,
That stern tenacity of plan,
Which tyrants hate, but none despise?—
Of course thou art an Englishman!"

THE FLEET AT SPITHEAD.

1. "England is sunken, sunken."—*French Writer.*

2. "That England now so prostrate."—*German Paper*, Feb. 1854.

3. "Does she think we fear her, as if she were still what once she was."—*Russian Paper.*

I.

Ah, sunken, sunken!—Yet the wreck
Hath left a bubble here and there;
I see some little ocean-speck
Come flitting at a lady's beck,—
'Tis very like a hundred ships of war!

II.

Ah, prostrate, prostrate! Doth the fall
A trivial wisp of dust evoke?
I see some little airy pall
Come drifting at a lady's call,—
'Tis wondrous like two thousand cannons' smoke!

III.

Ye fear her! Ye are crouched too low,
Beneath the scourges of your Czar,
To offer front for manly blow;
Nor homes have ye to dread the woe,
Which men, who cherish aught, confess in war.

IV.

Ye stately ships, that ride ataunt,
Nor shatter yet the Baltic gate;
Too proud and powerful to vaunt,
Or play at idle pennon's flaunt;
Each pregnant with a sea-throned city's fate;

V.

Bold shaft of each sky-lancing spar,
And streakèd rain of rope and shroud,
And port-holes grim, that gleam afar,
The windows of embattled war,
And every sail a folded thunder-cloud;

VI.

And yards lashed home (like Titan's arms
Braced in the square repose of strength)
And rattlins, dark with pigmy swarms,
The roven strain of Ate's charms,
Or cord of her who snaps the vital length;

VII.

Ye look upon the fickle spray,
And dimpled homage of the tide,
In such dark-belted, laced array,
As looks Vesuvius o'er the bay,
Whose sapphire ooch but ministers his pride.

VIII.

So looked Inarime of yore,
A buoyant mountain wombed with death,
Adrift, as fate and wild winds bore,
Or anchored, to bombard the shore,
Whose outrage had incurred her blasting breath

IX.

Now spread your pinions' roc-like span,
And ply your ocean-quaking fins,
(Compared to which, Leviathan
But waves a languid maiden's fan,)—
For peace must lose if usurpation wins.

X.

Your thunder-snort, and levin-flash,
Is all the answer shall be sped,
To those, who, by forbearance rash,
Ply villain's trade and madman's trash,
That England's power and England's will are dead

EPITAPH ON A CERTAIN TORTOISE.

Ὡς ἐμὲ, τὸν βραδύπουν, δαίμων πόδας ὠκὺς ἔμαρψε,
Κ' ου στέγει ἡμέτερον δέρμα βέλη θανάτου.
Ὅσσα γὰρ ἐν νώτοισι χελώνη στίγματα φύει,
Ἄλγεα τόσσα βίου, καὶ θανάτοιο πόροι.
Ἀλλότριος, δόσυπνός τε, μίνυνθά περ, οὔτι μάλα δὴν,
Ὤγμενον στιβάδων ῥιπτοκαλυπτὸς ὁδόν·
Ἦ μάλα δῆτ' ἐπόθουν, ἱερὰν φόρμιγγα κόνισας,
Κάμπτειν, οὐκ ἀλύρως ἀλλ' ἀκονιτὶ, βίον.
Πολλάκις αὖτ' ἐθέλεσκον ἰδεῖν εὐδείελον ἀκτὴν
Ἑλλάδος εἰαρινῆς, αἰθριόκοιτος ἐών.
Νῦν δ' ἐμὸι οὔτι μέλει ἔαρ ἔσσεται, ἤ κεν ὀπώρα,
Ἀτρέμας* αἰλούρων, νήγρετον ὕπνον ἔχω.
Μαψιδίως καλέσει με νέον φάος ἠελίοιο,
Ὥς ποτε, καὶ ῥοΐζος δεσπότου ὀρθριδία.

* The cats used to tease him shockingly.

TRANSLATIONS.

[It is hoped that the following early efforts may obtain indulgence.]

HYLAS.

Hylas, the bright-haired, sprung with boyish zeal
To fetch the water for their evening meal.
A fount he spied, in a sequestered mead,
Embroidered round with many a fringing reed,
Grey celandine, and grass-green maidenhair,
Parsley, and bineweed, creeping by the mere.
Nymphs, in mid wave, a frolic measure led,
Nymphs ever wakeful, and the rustic's dread;
Eunice there with pretty Malis vies,
And sweet Nycea of spring-beaming eyes.
The youth, to dip the bellied urn intent,
Beyond the margin, o'er the water leant;
They clustered round, and clung upon his hand,
For sudden love beset the tender band,—
Love for the Argive boy. At once he fell,
Bodily plunged into the sombre well;
Bodily thus at sea a meteor falls,
Whereat unto his mates the captain calls,
"Cheerily, lads; give way there with a will;
The wind is aft, and let it blow its fill!"

Upon their laps they held the weeping boy,
With coaxing words, and every winsome toy.—
In keen alarm, came forth Amphitryon's son,
And wondering where the truant child had gone;
In Scythian style his well-arched bow he took,
And club that ne'er his strong right hand forsook:
Thrice he called "Hylas," thrice the echoes sent
The loudest shout his mighty throat could vent;
Thrice answered Hylas,—but the cry he gave
Came thin and feeble from the closing wave:
Nigh was the youth, below his feet he lay,
The while the hero thought him far away.

As when a bearded lion hears afar
A fawn, that calls to catch her mother's ear,
A lion on the hills, aprowl for blood,
Hot from his lair to meet the welcome food,—
So toiled Alcides through the untrodden brake,
Full many a league, gone wild for Hylas' sake.
True friends are stubborn to admit their loss:
Through forest-depths and mountain crags across,
How hard he struggled, and how long he sought!
And Jason's matters were not worth a thought.
Long time for him the vessel's course was stayed,
With yards ataunt, and swelling sails displayed:
Till half the night was run, the comrade band
'Bode his return, and left the oars unmanned;
He knew not, cared not, what the path he trod,
Consumed for ever by an unrelenting God.

THEOCRITUS. Idyl 13, v. 36 et seq.

CYCLOPS.

THE herdsman Daphnis to Damætas came,
Their flocks were nigh, their pasture-ground the same:
The hair on Daphnis' cheek was light and thin,
A coming beard embrowned the other's chin.
To while a summer afternoon away,
Beside a well they sang their rustic lay:
And first, his tale young Daphnis must rehearse,
Commencing thus the friendly strife of verse.

"Cyclops, behold Miss Galatea's plot,
To pelt your sheep with many an apple-shot;
Their master, you, she calls a teasing churl,
But you deign not a glance towards the girl;
And there you sit, provokingly at ease,
And play your pipe, as calmly as you please.
Again—again! Your dog she's pelting now;
Good 'Shepherd' looks, and gives the sea bow-wow,
The clear waves show him trotting on the beach,
The waves that prattle on the shingled reach:
Speak—that he fly not at the little dear,
And tear her soft limbs, as she cometh near.
Ah there! What airs and graces! As, in June,
The thistle-floss coys to the parching noon:
She flies who courts, who courts her not, she'll press,
And move the last man of her shepherd's chess:
Then courage, Cyclops! For, to eyes of love,
The unattractive doth attractive prove."

He ceased: And next Damætas must advance,
To play the Cyclops of their quaint romance.

"Yes, by great Pan, I marked her when she threw,
I marked her, though I feigned not to view;

Yes, by this eye—so dear because alone,
The only peeper I shall ever own;
(But as for Telemus, that seer of ill,
Ill may he keep, and give his bairns their fill!)
I know the way to tease—I shut my eye,
And vow I have some other sweetheart nigh;
Straight when she hears she's vexed in such degree,
She must be jealous (oh, how fine!) of me!—
Forth from the waves, by pique and passion torn,
She peers at every grot, and every lawn;
'Shepherd,' I whisper, 'bark at her, my boy,'—
Because, when she was all my pride and joy,
He used to whine, and coax so for a tap,
And thrust his muzzle in my lady's lap.
Belike, if I can hold to this much more,
She'll send a message,—but I'll shut the door;
Until she vow that she herself will come,
And make this little isle her nuptial home.—
Well, after all, my figure in its way,
Is not so bad, whatever folk may say:
'Twas lately when the waves were hushed to sleep,
I saw my image mirror'd in the deep;
My beard made certainly a goodly show;
And, as our own ideas of beauty go,
My one eye seemed a very handsome one;
And as for teeth—they could not be outdone!
There came a gleam, the clear enamel through,
More white than ever Parian marble knew.
When I had gazed, to 'scape the evil hest,
Three times I spat into my open breast;
Cotyttaris, from whom I learned the charm,
Played to the mowers on Hippocoon's farm."

When thus his simple roundelay had end,
Damætas kindly kissed his village-friend;
Then gave a rebec, at his earnest suit,
Daphnis in turn bestowed a mellow flute:
The keepsake flute at once Damætas played,
Nor, Daphnis, was thy rebec unassayed;
Each swain's gay herd went dancing round the lawn,
For neither triumphed, nor did either mourn.

THEOCRITUS. Idyl 6.

CLOUDS.

I.

Clouds eternal,
Welling ever dews supernal,
Lift our state, and show it higher—
  Limpid, and agleam, we mount
From Oceanus our sire,
  (Heavy-roaring fount,)
To the towering highlands' crest,
With dishevelled foliage tress'd,
Where our 'vantage-watch we keep,
Glancing downward from the steep;
Watch the earth her fruitage slaking
  With the purling streamlet's chant
    (The heaven's haunt)
And ocean's chant in thunder-breaking:
  For the eye of air is bright
    With spangled store,
  Fount of unexhausted light.
Doff we now the vapoured showers,
    And immortal coil we bore,
Mark we, from afar, the bowers
    Of the wide terrestrial shore.

II.

Choir maiden,
With the gentle showers laden,
Haste we to the dainty land;
  See we now Athena's own,
Famous for its manly band,
  Cecrops' lovely throne:

There, from eye and tongue profane,
Temple of religion's reign
Guards her grand and mystic rite,
Only for the hallowed sight;
There are gifts to heaven perfected,
  Shrines with sculptured ceiling rich,
  And statued niche,
And holy access of the elected:
  Priesthood's brow with chaplets crowned,
    And revel light,
  Speed the circling seasons round;
When the dawning spring advances,
    Hail the Bromian delight!
Rivals ply the echoing dances,
    While the mellow flutes invite.

ARISTOPHANES, Clouds, v. 275.

LOVE.

Love who bears the palm of fight,
Swoops on wealth no pinion weak,
Nestles, through the live-long night,
In the maiden's damask cheek.

He visits the rustic shieling,
He roves across the main;
Immortals own the feeling,
And mortals fly in vain.

Each, in turn, must rage and burn;
E'en the man in justice strong
Love seduces, to his uses,
And turns his steps to wrong.

'Twas love that woke these fatal brawls,
And sever'd social ties;
The love that yon fair maid enthrals,
And flashes from her eyes.

'Tis love that sits enthroned in state,
Amid the regal courts;
Resistless and insatiate,
The Paphian goddess sports.

Me too along the path of wrong,
My swelling anguish bears;
I cannot stay my passion's way,
The fountain of my tears.

Sophocles. Antigone. v. 781

"My gentle Puck, come hither. Thou remember'st
Since once I sat upon a promontory,
And heard a mermaid on a dolphin's back
Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath,
That the rude sea grew civil at her song,
And certain stars shot madly from their spheres,
To hear the sea-maid's music."

"Midsummer Night's Dream," Act ii. scene 2.

"We'll go no more a roving,
So late into the night;
Though the heart be still as loving,
And the moon be still as bright.

"For the sword wears out the sheath,
And the heart wears out the breast;
And lips must pause to breathe,
And love itself have rest.

"Though the night was made for loving,
And the day return too soon;
Yet we'll go no more a roving
By the light of the moon."

— Δεῦρο, δεῦρο Πούκιον,
Οἶσθ' οὖν, ὅτ' ἴζων ἐν πετρᾷ δυσχειμέρῳ,
Κουρὴν δι' ὤτων ἠσθόμην θαλασσίαν,
Νώτοις ὕγρου δέλφινος ἱπποβάμονα,
Ἥδιστ' ἀοιδαὶς εὐστόμειν μειλίγματα;
Ὥστ' ἐμπνεούσης, ἀγριὸν πόντου κτύπον
Εὐφῆμα σαίνειν, μυρίοις γελάσμασιν·
Κἄπειτ' ἴδοις ἂν, οὐράνου 'ξ ἀναπτυχῶν,
Λαμπρῶν φάλαγγας ἀστέρων καταιγίσαι,
Κουρῆς ἀκούειν ποντίας πρὸς ἡδονήν.

Sero vespere non libet vagari,
Ah non ille redauspicandus error;
Quamvis non alium calemus ignem,
Quanquam non aliâ micante lunâ.

Vaginam scabra rodit ut machæra,
Cor præcordia rodit inquietum;
Somno labra remurmurare discunt,
Somno tela redintegrat Cupido.

At quamvis data nox amoris hora,
Et quanquam jubar ocyus redibit
Nobis amplius haud libet vagari,
Nobis non aliâ micante lunâ.

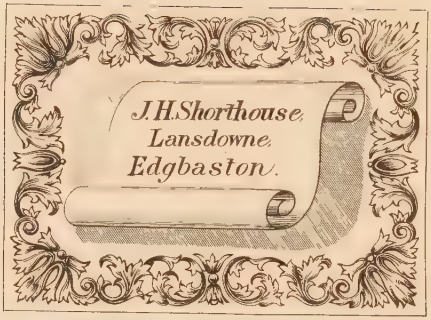
" Meanwhile the tepid caves, and fens, and shores,
Their brood as numerous hatch from the egg, that soon
Bursting with kindly rupture forth disclosed
Their callow young; but feathered soon and fledged
They summ'd their pens; and soaring the air sublime,
With clang despised the ground, under a cloud
In prospect: there the eagle and the stork
On cliffs and cedar-tops their eyries build.
Part loosely wing the region; part more wise
In common, ranged in figure, wedge their way,
Intelligent of seasons, and set forth
Their airy caravan, high over seas
Flying and over lands, with mutual wing
Easing their flight; so steers the prudent crane
Her annual voyage, borne on winds; the air
Floats as they pass, fann'd with unnumber'd plumes."

" Paradise Lost," Book vii.

Intereà fossæque cavæ, tepidique recessus,
Littoraque, exsolvunt pullos non seciùs ovis,
Hi rupêre foras, geniali fragmine testæ;
Inplumes primo, sed mox pubescere lanâ
Incipiunt sensim, justisque explerier alis;
Nec mora, continuoque magis magis aera carpunt;
Et jam contempsêre solum, nimboque volantes,
Cum rauco stridore, oculos tentâre videntum.
Illic, aut aquila, aut erecta ciconia saxo;
Atque inter summas nidum posuêre cypressus.
Pars incerta volat; sed pars divinitus agmen
Instruit inter se, certoque ex ordine quadrat;
Fit cuneus, sulcatque viam: non sidera cœli
Nescivêre illi, tempestatesque serenas.
Protinus, aerias super altum exercitus alas
Agglomerat, terrasque super; facilesque vicissim
Excipiunt motus junctæ conamine pennæ.
Annua grus adeo, venturi præscia, clavum
Remigio torquet, subvecta levamine cœli;
Auraque pennarum innumeris micat excita flabris.

FINIS.

LONDON:
SAVILL AND EDWARDS, PRINTERS, CHANDOS STREET,
COVENT GARDEN.


J. H. Shorthouse,
Lansdowne,
Edgbaston.